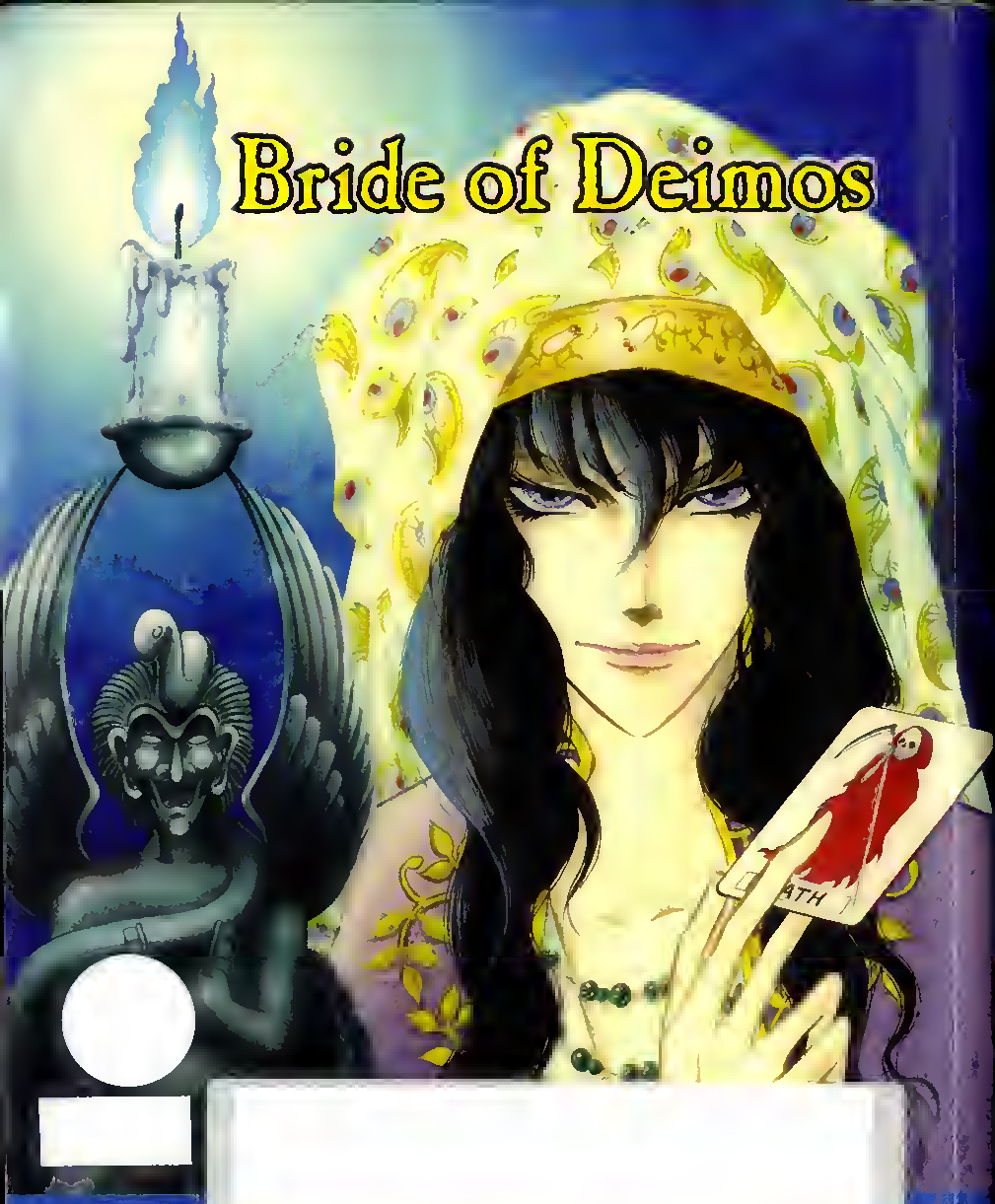
Bride of Deimos



7

Story / Etsuko Ikeda

ONE
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Aboard a Japanese cruise liner a seemingly lifeless manikin seeks revenge. Also Venus makes another devious move to reclaim her lost love.

Bride of Deimos

VOL.7

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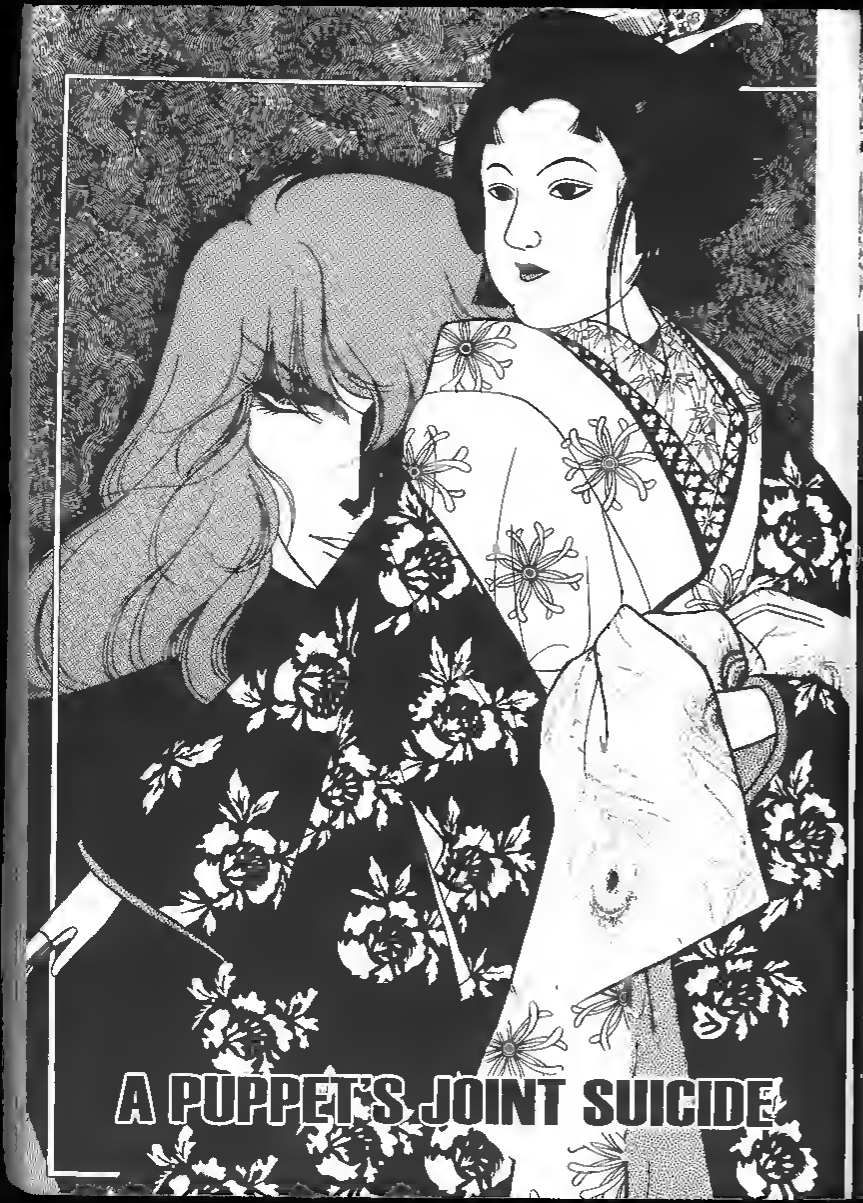

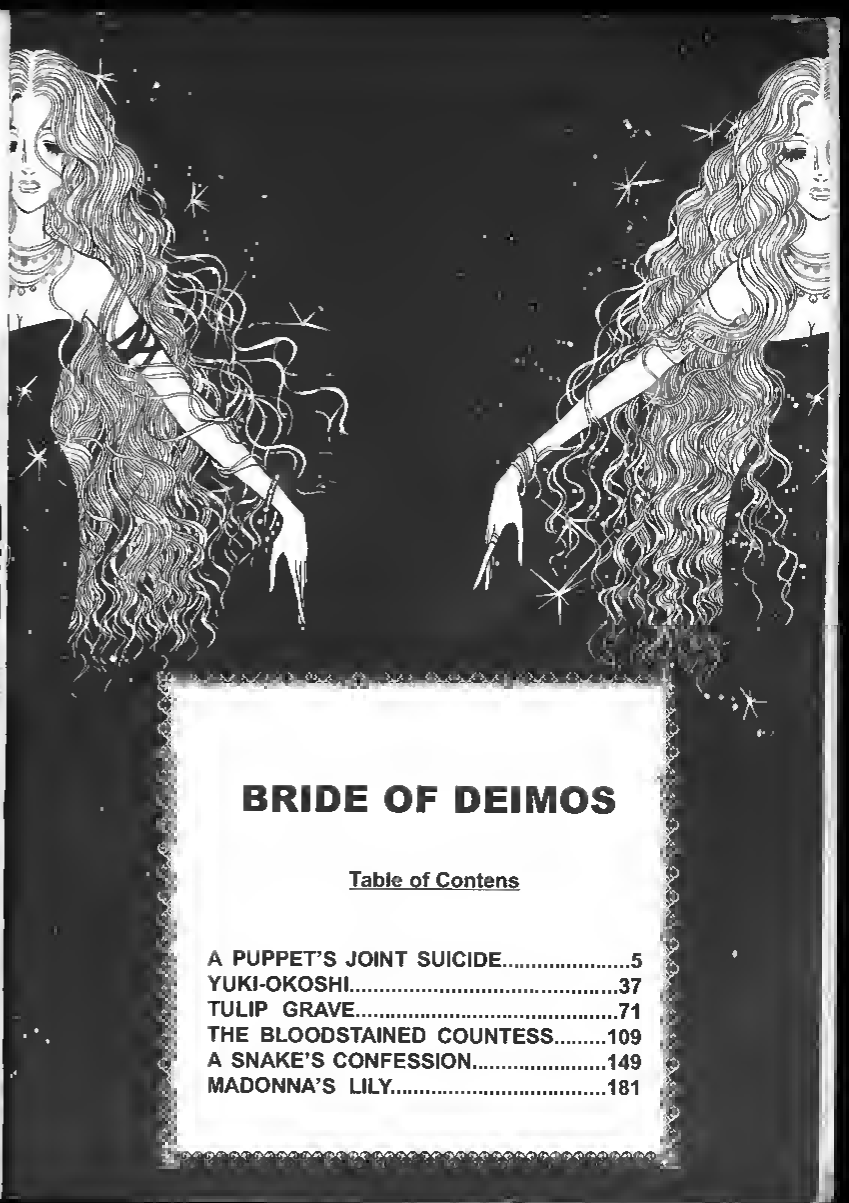

BRIDE OF DEIMOS

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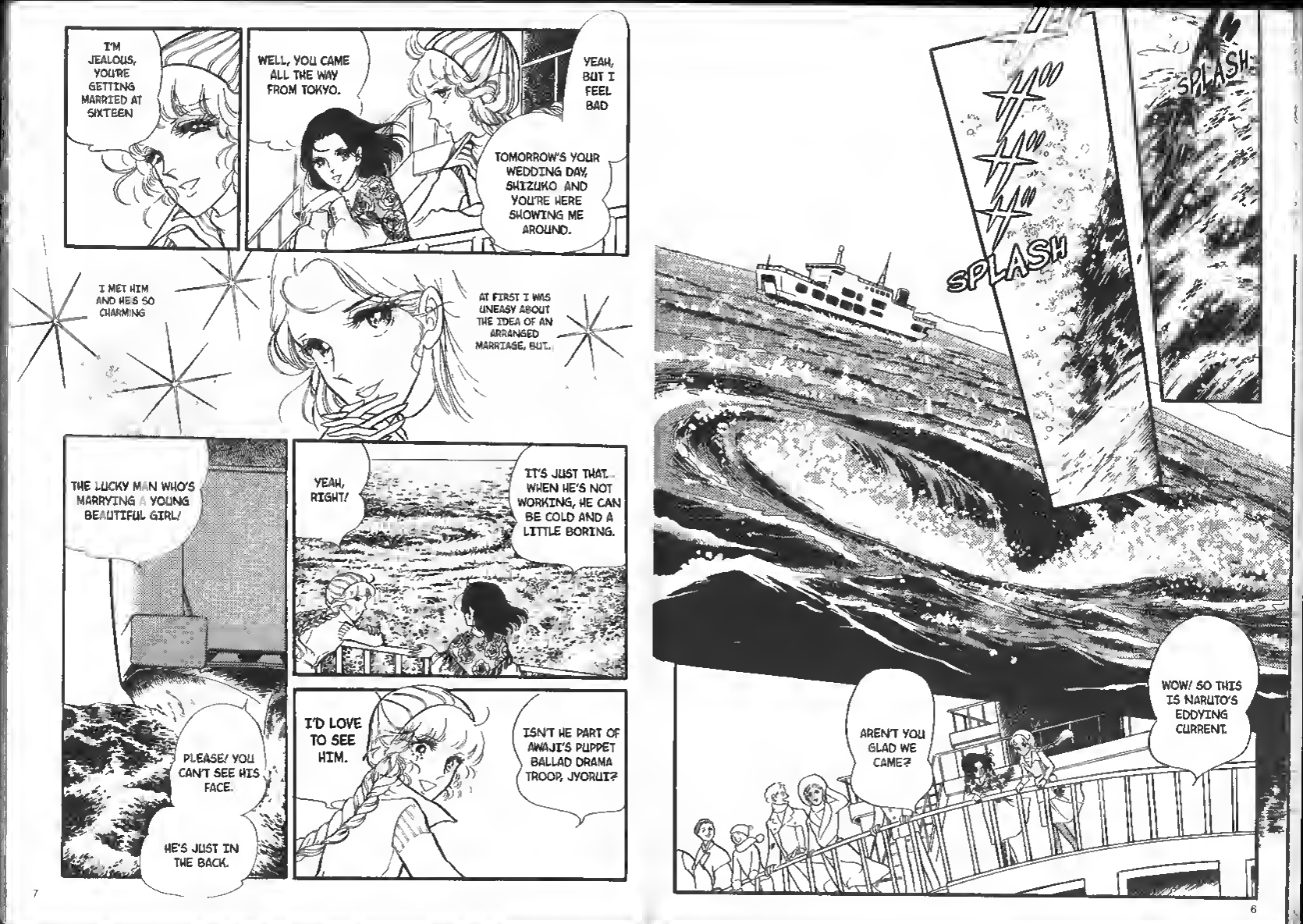
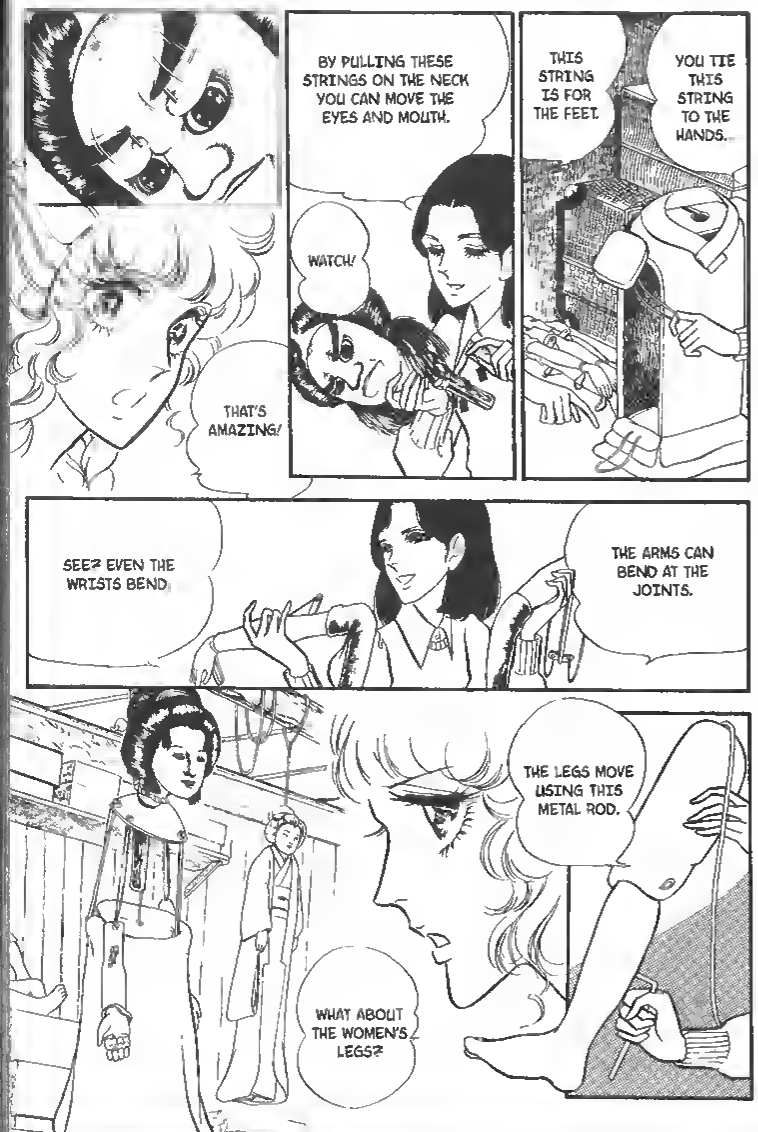

WOW! SO THIS IS NARUTO'S EDDYING CURRENT.
AREN'T YOU GLAD WE CAME?
SPLASH
SPLASH
WELL, YOU CAME ALL THE WAY FROM TOKYO.
YEAH, BUT I FEEL BAD
TOMORROW'S YOUR WEDDING DAY, SHIZUKO AND YOU'RE HERE SHOWING ME AROUND.
I'M JEALOUS, YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED AT SIXTEEN
I MET HIM AND HE'S SO CHARMING
AT FIRST I WAS UNEASY ABOUT THE IDEA OF AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE, BUT...
IT'S JUST THAT... WHEN HE'S NOT WORKING, HE CAN BE COLD AND A LITTLE BORING.
YEAH, RIGHT!
THE LUCKY MAN WHO'S MARRYING A YOUNG BEAUTIFUL GIRL!
I'D LOVE TO SEE HIM.
ISN'T HE PART OF AWAJI'S PUPPET BALLAD DRAMA TROOP, JYORUI?
PLEASE! YOU CAN'T SEE HIS FACE.
HE'S JUST IN THE BACK.

THE BELL SOUNDS THE GOSPEL OF NIRVANA
THE SONEZAWA JOINT SUICIDE IS PLAYWRITER CHIKAMATSUMON-ZAEMON'S MASTERPIECE
THE SEVENTH ONE RINGS FOR THIS WORLD, THIS LIFE.
THE BELL TOLLING, THE HOUR OF DAWN RINGS SIX TIMES
SHOP ASSISTANT TOKUBEI OF OSAKA'S LEADING SOY SAUCE STORE AND COURTESAN OHATSU FALL DEEPLY IN LOVE
HOWEVER DREADFUL TALKS OF WEDDING EXPENSES DRIVE THEM TO MELONCHOLY AND THE TWO COMMIT A JOINT SUICIDE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SONEZAKI GODS

HE WEARS A HOOD? THAT'S NO FUN!
WALKING TOWARDS DEATH.
PASSING LIFE, THE PASSING NIGHT.
ONE STEP AT A TIME, DISAPPEARING DOWN ADASHIGAHARA, WHITE WITH FROST
SOMEONE'S RECITING A JYORUI!
IT'S THE "SONEZAKI JOINT SUICIDE."
SPLASH
SPLASH
A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM


BY PULLING THESE STRINGS ON THE NECK YOU CAN MOVE THE EYES AND MOUTH.
WATCH!
THAT'S AMAZING!
THIS STRING IS FOR THE FEET.
YOU TIE THIS STRING TO THE HANDS.
SEE? EVEN THE WRISTS BEND.
THE ARMS CAN BEND AT THE JOINTS.
THE LEGS MOVE USING THIS METAL ROD.
WHAT ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LEGS?

ARE YOU CRYING, MINAKO?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE WOODEN PUPPETS
I CAN FEEL THEIR SOUL.
MUSUMEGASHIRA.
MARUME
BESSHI
THIS IS KADOME
THE NECK FITS RIGHT HERE
THIS IS THE BODY OF A MALE PUPPET.
THERE'S MORE
WOW!

CREEK
TAMAO!
THEY MAY LOOK REAL ON STAGE BUT IF YOU STRIP THEM NAKED, THEY LOOK PITIFUL.
THEY DON'T HAVE ANY
I'M ACTUALLY NOT QUALIFIED TO PLAY..
SUCH A BIG PART LIKE OHATSU'S, BUT...
YOU GUYS WERE WATCHING?
THIS IS MINAKO FROM TOKYO.
GOOD JOB!
THE SWEETNESS AND PASSION OF OHATSU'S LOVE TOUCHED MY HEART.
THE PERFORMANCE WAS REMARKABLE.

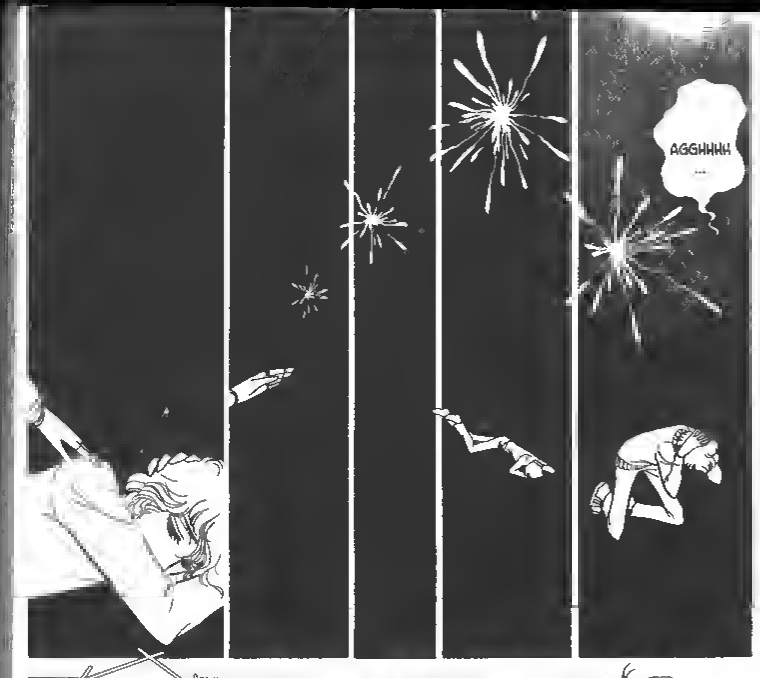
WOW!
BUT WITH OHATSU, NONE OF THE OTHER PUPPETEERS CAN COMPETE WITH TAMAO'S PERFORMANCE.
I WAS DETERMINED TO RISK MY LIFE TO PLAY HER PART.
I PUT MY HEART AND SOUL INTO STUDYING HER HAIR ARRANGEMENTS AND DRESSING TECHNIQUES
I FELL IN LOVE WITH OHATSU WHEN I APPRENTICED MYSELF TO THE MASTER
IF OHATSU WERE HUMAN, I'D WANT TO MARRY HER
YOU MUST FEEL SO MUCH LOVE FOR HER

OUCH!
REALLY?
IN AWAJI ALL THE JYORUI ACTORS AND SHAMISEN PLAYERS ARE FARMERS OR RUN FAMILY BUSINESSES
I'M GONNA BE A GOOD WIFE AND CARE FOR THESE PUPPETS.
THE PUPPET. BIT ME!

THIS IS A GIFT TO US FROM THE MASTER
OH YEAH!
HAHAHA!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SAY "UNTIL I MET YOU."
YEAH! HE SAYS IT WON'T BE EASY MANAGING A HOUSEHOLD, SO HE WANTS US TO AT LEAST ENJOY A RELAXING HONEYMOON.
PLANE TICKETS?
TO HAWAII!?
NO WAY!

DONE! AFTER OUR WEDDING TOMORROW, WE'RE OFF TO HAWAII!
CLICK
SLIDE
OURS IS A LOVE TRIP.
I'M SO GLAD OURS ISN'T A SUICIDE TRIP OF LOVERS LIKE OHATSU'S
YEAH
HM ?
WHAT'S WRONG?

DON'T BE SILLY YOU PROBABLY JUST HURT YOURSELF ON THE LIP-NEEDLE.
HEH
BY HOOKING A TOWEL ON THIS NEEDLE AND SHAKING HER HEAD YOU CAN COMPRESS HER LIPS AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE SHE'S CRYING
LOOK AT HER MOUTH
LIP-NEEDLE ?
COME ON NOW
HOW ARE YOU GONNA CARE FOR THE PUPPETS LIKE THIS?


AGGHHHH
...

I HAVE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
YES. I'M OHATSU THE PUPPET.
YOU'RE...!?

I CAN'T FIND THE TICKETS.
THEY'RE PROBABLY IN THE COSTUME ROOM. I'LL GO LOOK
OUCH!
WHAM
THAT'S STRANGE. WHERE DID I DROP THEM?

THAT'S HOW WE CAPTURED THE AUDIENCE'S HEARTS!
MY LOVE FOR YOU HAS BEEN RESIDING IN OHATSU'S HEART.
DON'T THINK IT'S YOUR SKILL.
WHAT!
"YOU'D MARRY ME IF I WERE HUMAN..." THOSE WERE ALL LIES?
SO EVERYTHING YOU SAID, "OHATSU IS SWEET. OHATSU IS BEAUTIFUL."
HOW CAN A PUPPET FALL IN LOVE WITH ME...?
YOU... YOU'RE A PUPPET...

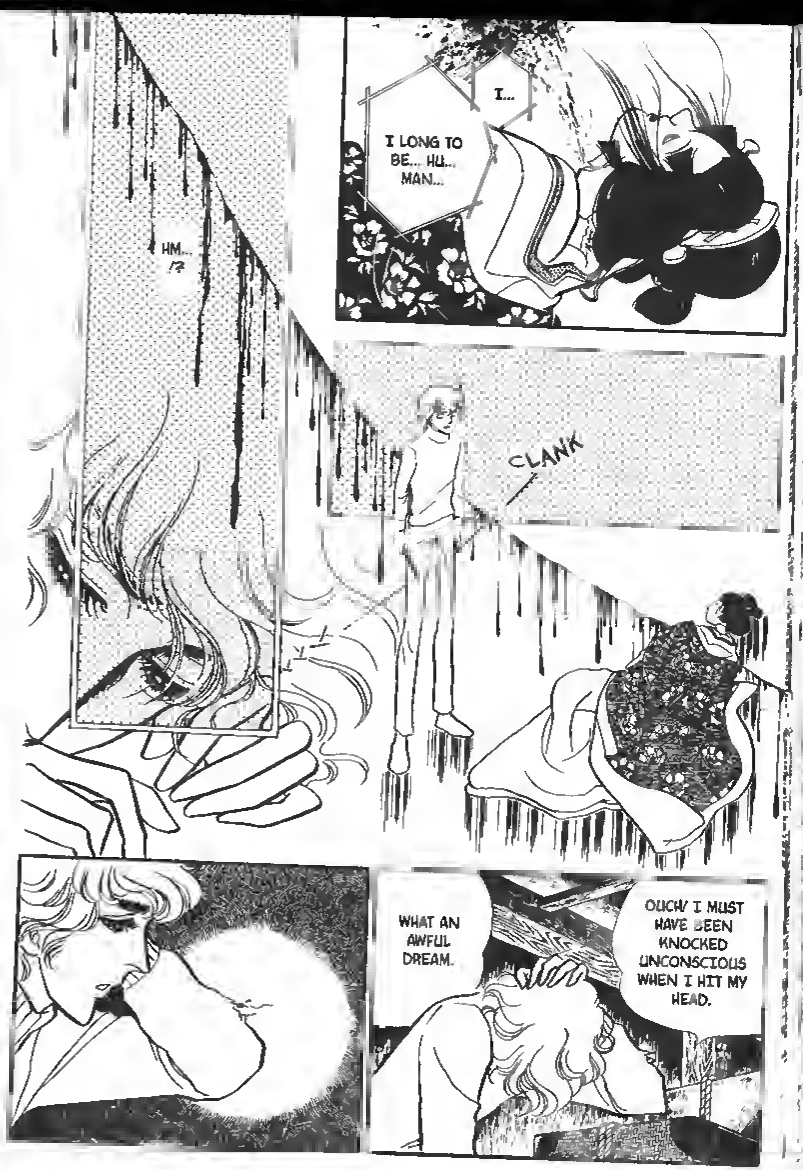
NO!
GIVE IT BACK!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
THERE WILL BE NO HONEYMOON FOR YOU TWO!
RIP
YOU'RE A YOUNG PRODIGY PUPPETEER
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU OWE YOUR POPULARITY AND SUCCESS TO?

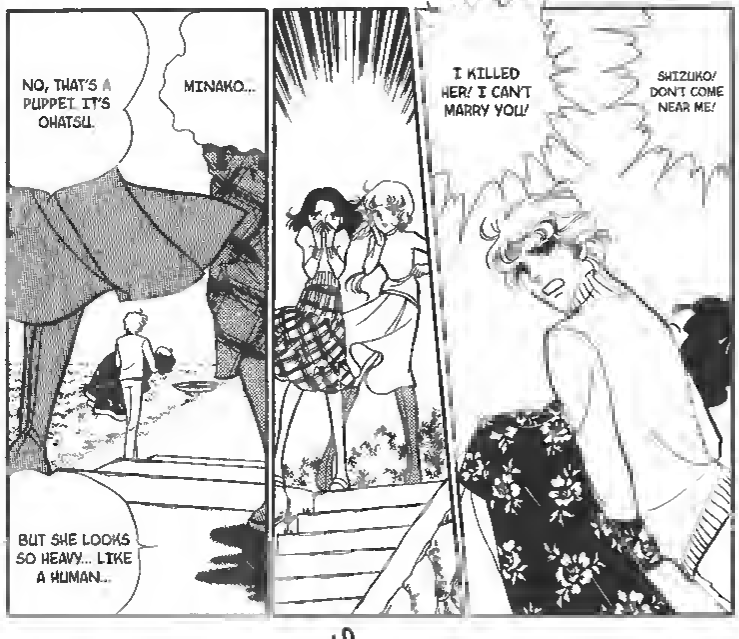
EVEN PUPPETS HAVE THEIR SENSE OF HONOR.
YIKES
YOU'RE NO LONGER MY PUPPET!
WAIT!
HALT
IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU...
...I'D RATHER DO WHAT WE'VE PRACTICED ON STAGE... COMMIT JOINT SUICIDE!
O-OHATSU...

SO YOU'LL JUST TOSS ME ASIDE LIKE SOME TOY YOU'VE GROWN WEARY OF?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! YOU'RE ONLY A PUPPET!
ALL GREAT PUPPETEERS FALL IN LOVE WITH THEIR PUPPETS!
TELL ME HONESTLY!
THAT YOU'VE REALLY FALLEN IN LOVE WITH A HUMAN
AAHHH... PUPPET...
PUPPET...
PUPPET!
THAT SADDENS ME...
IF ONLY I WERE HUMAN, YOU'D BE MINE, ONLY MINE...

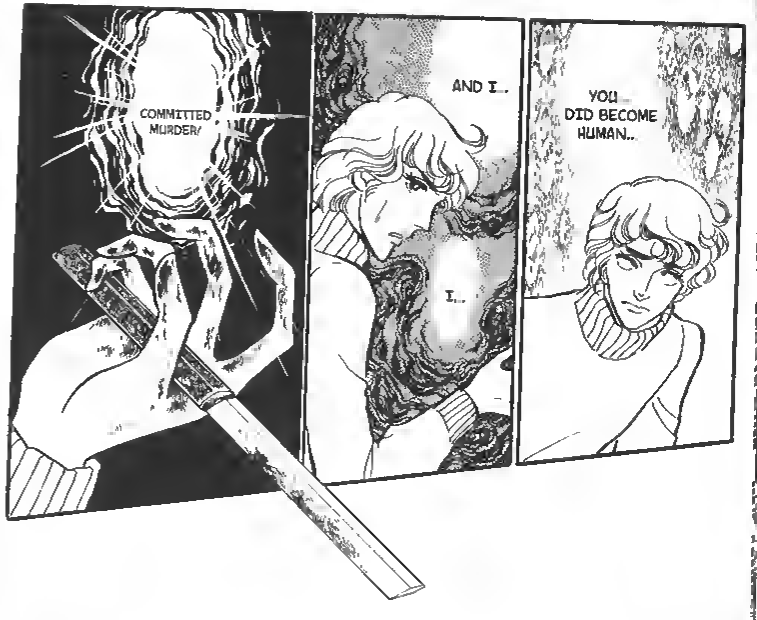
I SAID STOP!
SNATCH
OH NO! HER NECK!
STOP!
...WITH YOU!
SLASH
STOP! OHATSU!
I'LL KILL YOU...
OHATSU

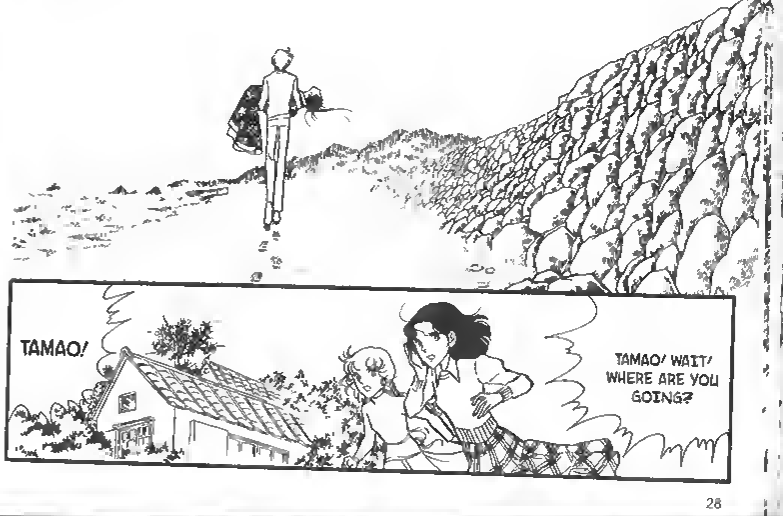
MY SLEEVE . . .!?
YIKES!
OH... OHATSU!
"I LONG TO BE HUMAN."


I...
I LONG TO BE... HU... MAN...
HM... !?
CLANK
WHAT AN AWFUL DREAM.
OUCH! I MUST HAVE BEEN KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS WHEN I HIT MY HEAD.

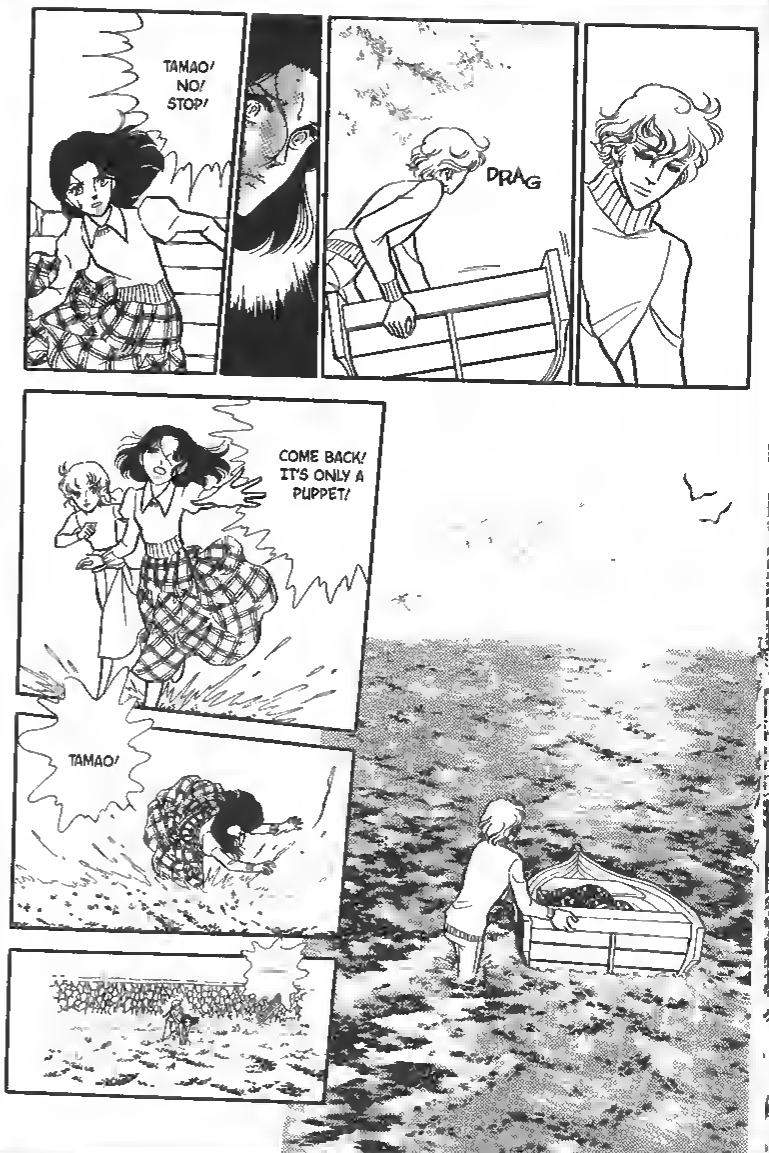

NO, THAT'S A PUPPET. IT'S OHATSU.
MINAKO...
BUT SHE LOOKS SO HEAVY... LIKE A HUMAN...
I KILLED HER! I CAN'T MARRY YOU!
SHIZUKO! DON'T COME NEAR ME!

SPLASH


COMMITTED MURDER!
AND I...
I...
YOU... DID BECOME HUMAN..


TAMAO!
TAMAO! WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

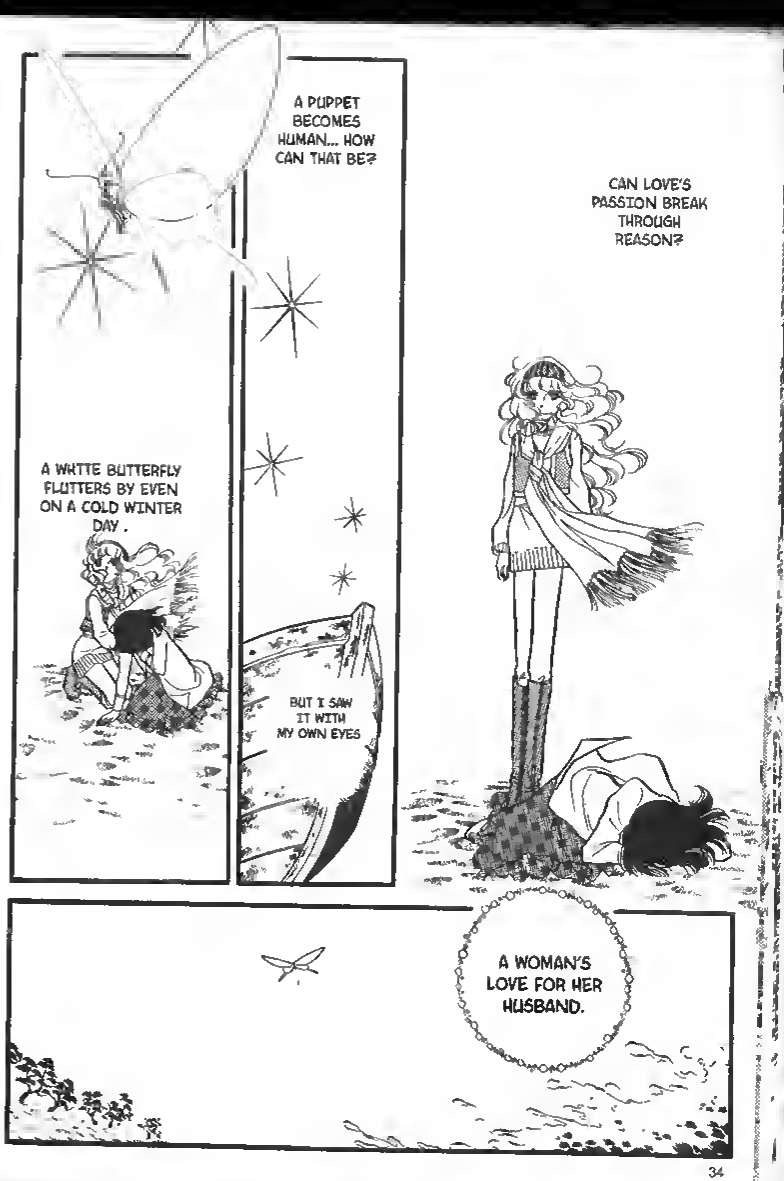
NOT ALONE
BUT I WILL NOT LET YOU DIE ALONE.
I'M SORRY OHATSU. IT MUST HAVE BEEN PAINFUL.
SHIZUKO...


TAMAO! NO! STOP!
DRAG
COME BACK! IT'S ONLY A PUPPET!
TAMAO!

AAAH!
GGH!
OH... MY...
TAMAO'S BODY WAS LOST IN THE WATER.

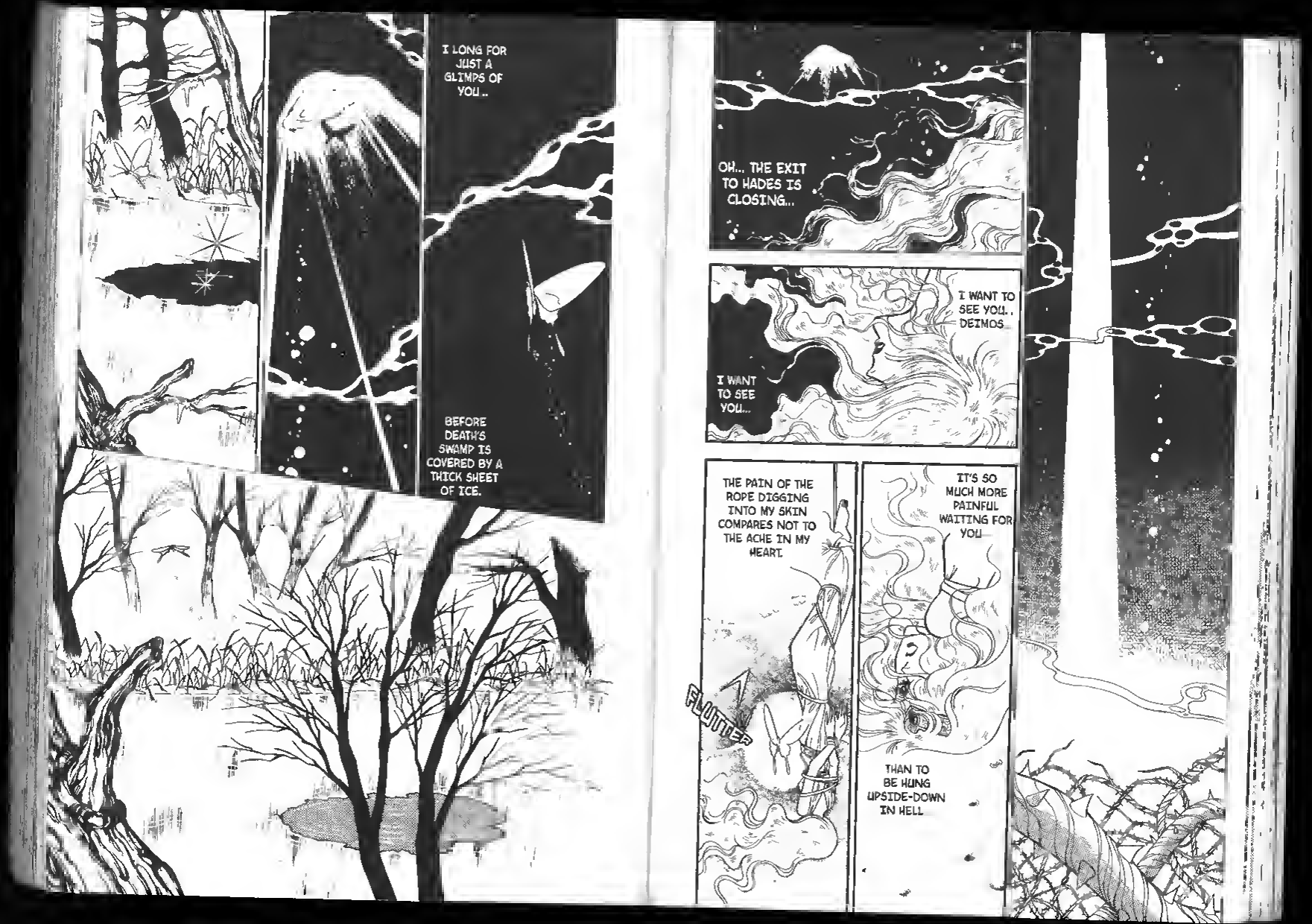
A MONTH LATER, TAMAO'S BOAT WAS WASHED ASHORE
YET...
FLIP
READY? LET'S FLIP IT OVER

SOARING IN THIS DIRECTION AND THAT DIRECTION.
BLOWN BY THE WIND, FLAPPING THE SLEEVES OF ITS WINGS.
LANDING ON THE SHOULDER, IT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF A SWALLOWTAIL ON A DESIGNED FLOWER
THE DYED PATTERNS APPEAR AS FLOWERS.
WHAT AN UNUSUAL PLOT, VENUS.
HMHM I WAS ONLY IMITATING YOU, RECITING MY VERSION OF THE SONEZAKI JOINT SUICIDE.


A PUPPET BECOMES HUMAN... HOW CAN THAT BE?
A WHITE BUTTERFLY FLUTTERS BY EVEN ON A COLD WINTER DAY.
BUT I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES
CAN LOVE'S PASSION BREAK THROUGH REASON?
A WOMAN'S LOVE FOR HER HUSBAND.

YUKI-OKOSHI

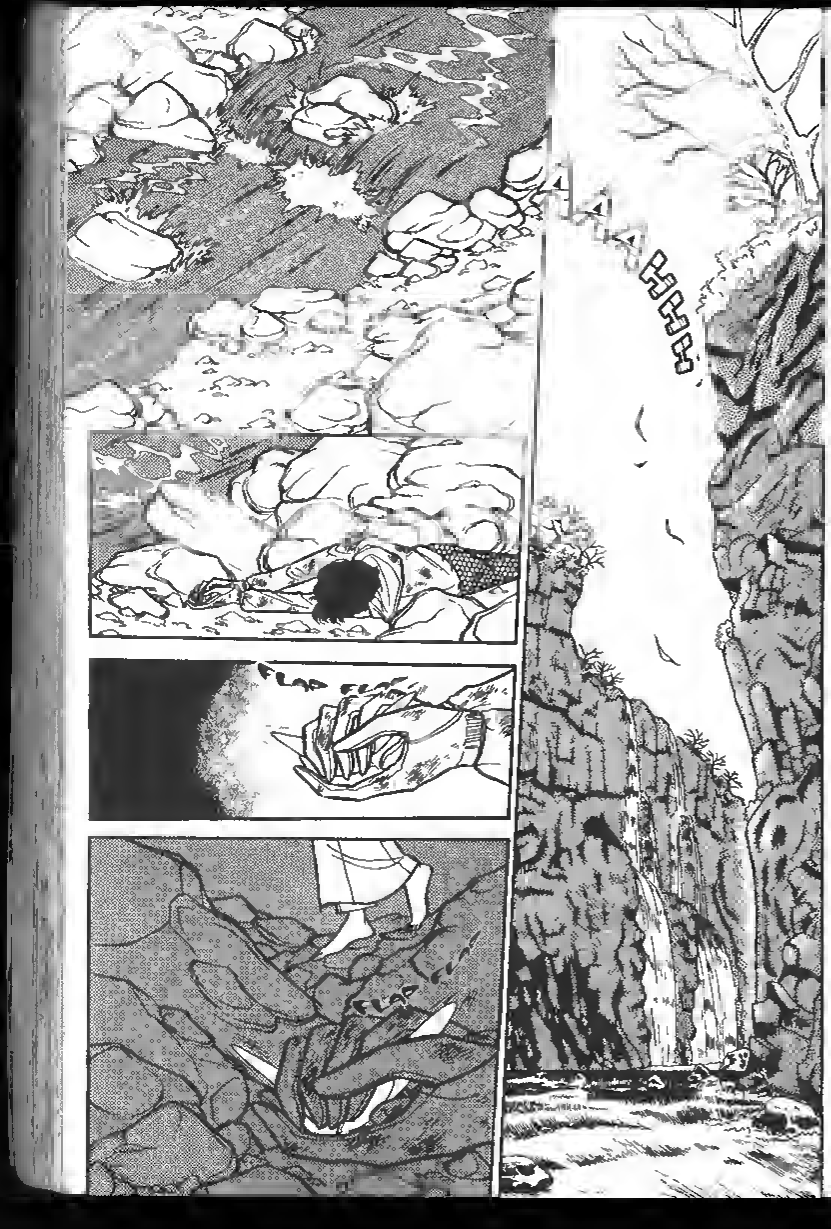
I SHALL TOO...
JUST A PUPPET, YET SHE SEIZED A MAN'S HEART WITH A WOMAN'S DETERMINATION
THAT CHATSU/
DEIMOS/ I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE YOU TO MINAKO/

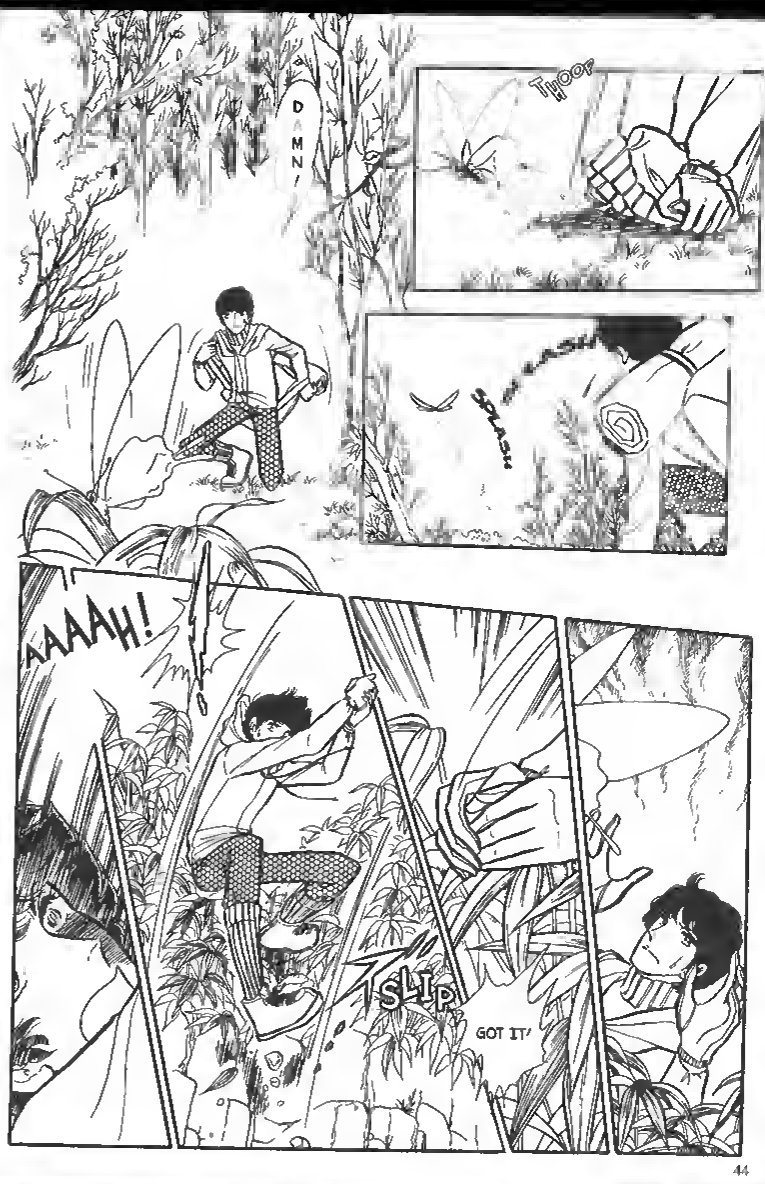

I LONG FOR JUST A GLIMPS OF YOU..
BEFORE DEATH'S SWAMP IS COVERED BY A THICK SHEET OF ICE.
OH... THE EXIT TO HADES IS CLOSING...
I WANT TO SEE YOU.. DEIMOS
I WANT TO SEE YOU...
THE PAIN OF THE ROPE DIGGING INTO MY SKIN COMPARES NOT TO THE ACHE IN MY HEART
FLUTTER
IT'S SO MUCH MORE PAINFUL WAITING FOR YOU
THAN TO BE HUNG UPSIDE-DOWN IN HELL

PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
CAN NOTHING BE DONE?
IT'S ALL MY FAULT..
RUSTLE
YOUR FEAR OF GOD AND HUMANS..
YOUR HEART WOULD PROBABLY NEVER HAVE BEEN..
IF WE HAD REMAINED SIMPLY BROTHER AND SISTER..
YOU WOULD HAVE CONTINUED TO SHINE IN THE GLORY OF GOD..
TORN BETWEEN MINAKO AND ME
SNAP
SNAP
DRIFT
TWO LEAVES MINAKO'S AND MINE...?
OH DEIMOS, YOU LOOK SO LONELY THERE..

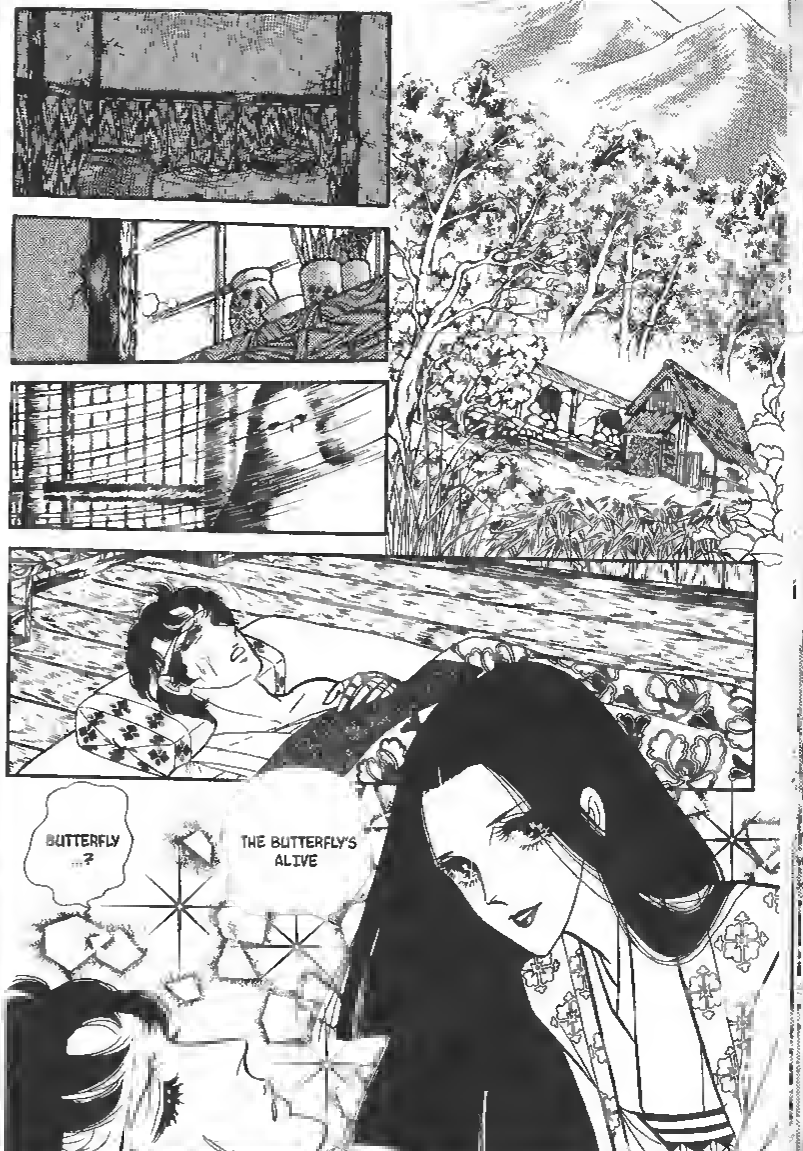
I WAS CARRIED AWAY BY THOUGHTS OF MY BROTHER.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
ON A COLD WINTER DAY?
A WHITE SWALLOW-TAIL...
I'LL CATCH IT. IT MAY BE A NEW SPECIES!

I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE YOU TO ANOTHER!
DEAREST BROTHER, YOU HAVE BEEN MINE SINCE I WAS BORN!
EVEN IF I CAN'T RETURN TO EDEN
OH NO! SOMEONE'S COMING!
WE CAN SURVIVE HELL SO LONG AS WE ARE TOGETHER
RUSTL


AAAAH!
FLAP FLAP
FLAP


D-MN!
TUMP
SPLASH
AAAAH!
SLIP
GOT IT!

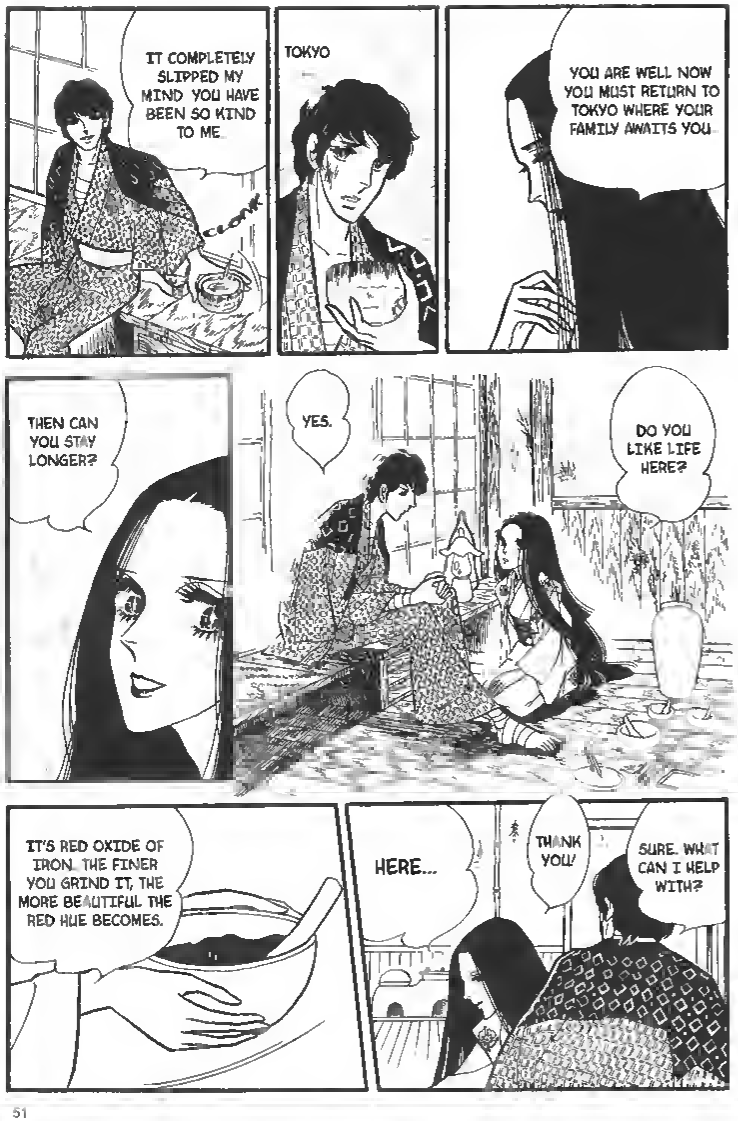
YOU WERE INJURED BADLY YET YOU HELD THE BUTTERFLY IN YOUR HANDS WITHOUT CRUSHING IT.
I ASSUME IT MUST BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO YOU.
FIVE DAYS!? OH NO!
YOU WERE ASLEEP FOR FIVE DAYS.
THANK YOU. HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE?
NO! YOU NEED TO REST FOR ANOTHER TEN DAYS.
OUCH!
I MUST GET HOME!
TEN DAYS ..


BUTTERFLY ...?
THE BUTTERFLY'S ALIVE

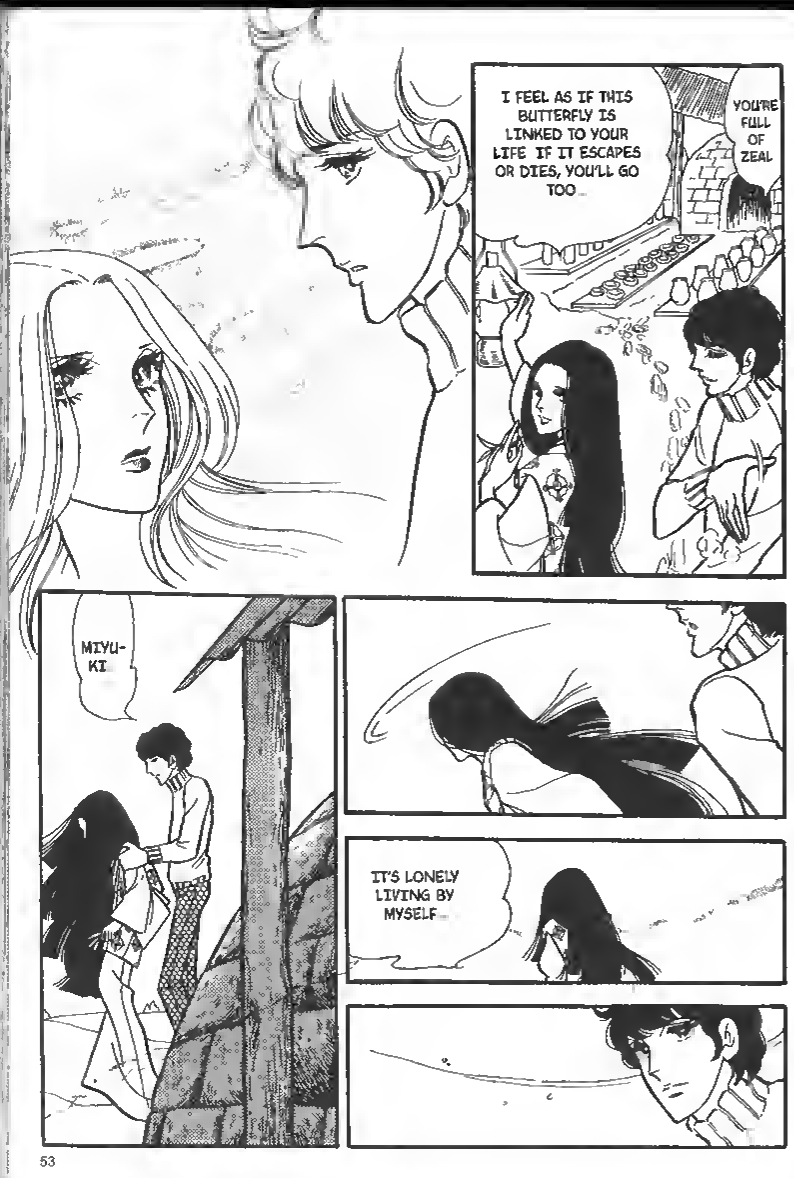
HE HAS SINCE PASSED AWAY... YOU'RE THE FIRST YOUNG MAN I HAVE EVER SEEN
WAS IT TOO BITTER?
AGH!
YES, MY GRANDFATHER RAISED ME AND TAUGHT ME POTTERY.
DO YOU REALLY LIVE HERE ALL BY YOURSELF?
FAIR SKIN... ALMOST TRANSPARENT...
HER MAGNIFICENTLY BLACK HAIR AND RED LIPS DRAW OUT THE WHITENESS OF HER SKIN.

SSST
HEY!
WHY NOT?
CAN YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM FOR ME?
MY FAMILY AND CO-WORKERS MUST BE WORRIED.
MY NAME IS MIYUKI
I'VE NEVER LEFT THIS MOUNTAIN.
DRINK THIS HERBAL TEA AND GET WELL.
SHRP
SHRP
THERE IS A MAN WHO COMES ONCE A YEAR TO BUY POTS. NO ONE ELSE COMES HERE.

A SOFT VOICE, A GENTLE WOMAN
MIYUKI... WHAT A FITTING NAME.
DOES ONE BECOME THAT WAY FROM LIVING ALONE?
I AWAKENED TO FIND THE LANDSCAPE MANTLED IN SILVERY SNOW
WHY NOT? YOU TOLD ME TO DRINK IT.
DON'T DRINK IT.

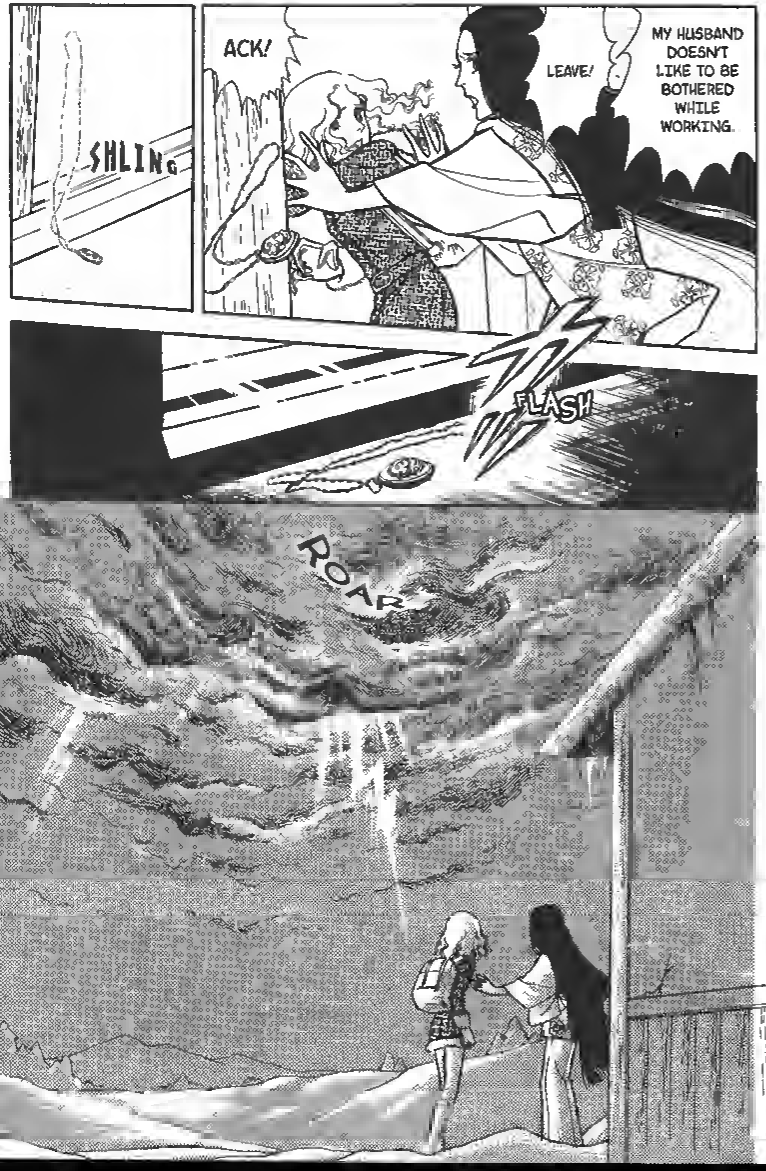

IT COMPLETELY SLIPPED MY MIND. YOU HAVE BEEN SO KIND TO ME.
CLONK
TOKYO
YOU ARE WELL NOW. YOU MUST RETURN TO TOKYO WHERE YOUR FAMILY AWAITS YOU.
THEN CAN YOU STAY LONGER?
YES.
DO YOU LIKE LIFE HERE?
IT'S RED OXIDE OF IRON. THE FINER YOU GRIND IT, THE MORE BEAUTIFUL THE RED HUE BECOMES.
HERE...
THANK YOU!
SURE. WHAT CAN I HELP WITH?

LIKE THIS?
KRKR
KRKR
YES. YOU CAN MANAGE ON YOUR OWN.
WE FIRE THESE POTS IN THE KILN?
I WAS GIVING THE BUTTERFLY SOME NECTAR FROM A FLOWER AND DEWDROPS FROM A PLANT.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING?


I FEEL AS IF THIS BUTTERFLY IS LINKED TO YOUR LIFE IF IT ESCAPES OR DIES, YOU'LL GO TOO...
YOU'RE FULL OF ZEAL
MIYU-KI
IT'S LONELY LIVING BY MYSELF...

SOMEONE SAW HIM ON THIS MOUNTAIN CHASING AFTER A BUTTERFLY.
HE'S MY FIANCE.
FIANCE?!

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU.
REALLY? DO YOU MEAN THAT?
FLUTTER


SHLING
ACK!
LEAVE!
MY HUSBAND DOESN'T LIKE TO BE BOTHERED WHILE WORKING.
FLASH
ROAR

I'M SORRY, BUT HE HASN'T STOPPED BY HERE.
THE POLICE HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIM BUT TO NO AVAIL. THREE MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE HE DISAPPEARED. EVERYONE BELIEVES HE'S DEAD, BUT I...
OH... OKAY...
I BELIEVE HE'S STILL ALIVE.
HAH
HEH...!
PLEASE LEAVE!
BUT HE LOOKS LIKE...
SLAM
HE'S MY HUSBAND!

HAH
DID I HEAR YOU TALKING WITH SOMEONE?
IF HE SEES HER, HE'LL REMEMBER LIFE IN THE CITY AND LEAVE ME.
SHE SMELLS LIKE THE CITY
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.
I CAN'T HAVE HIM SEE HER
WHY WOULD ANYONE COME HERE?
TRAMP
TRAMP
NO, OF COURSE NOT
UM...

FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY YOU MUST LEAVE THIS MOUNTAIN AT ONCE!
YUKI-OKOSHI..
?
YUKI-OKOSHI...
IT'S A SIGN THAT A SNOWSTORM IS COMING.
THUNDER IN THE WINTER IS CALLED YUKI-OKOSHI.
SLAM
GONE

SHE CAME HERE
IT'S REIKO'S
THERE'S A SNOWSTORM COMING!
YOU LET HER GO?
BAM
WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?
THAT'S NOT TRUE. MY LIFE IS HERE WITH YOU NOW...
BUT IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE OF ME TO COMPLETELY FORGET ABOUT MY WORK AND FAMILY.
WHAT IF REIKO CAN'T FIND HER WAY BACK?
IF YOU SEE HER YOU'LL NEVER RETURN TO ME!
YOU CAN'T GO! YOU CAN'T GO SEE HER!
YOU'LL FORGET ABOUT ME!
REIKO WAS STILL LOOKING FOR ME...
I HAVE TO AT LEAST APOLOGIZE TO HER I'LL TELL HER ALL ABOUT YOU
IT'S ALL A LIE...

SHE CAME HERE.
IT'S REIKO'S.
THERE'S A SNOWSTORM COMING!
YOU LET HER GO?
BAM
WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?

THAT'S NOT TRUE MY LIFE IS HERE WITH YOU NOW...
BUT IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE OF ME TO COMPLETELY FORGET ABOUT MY WORK AND FAMILY.
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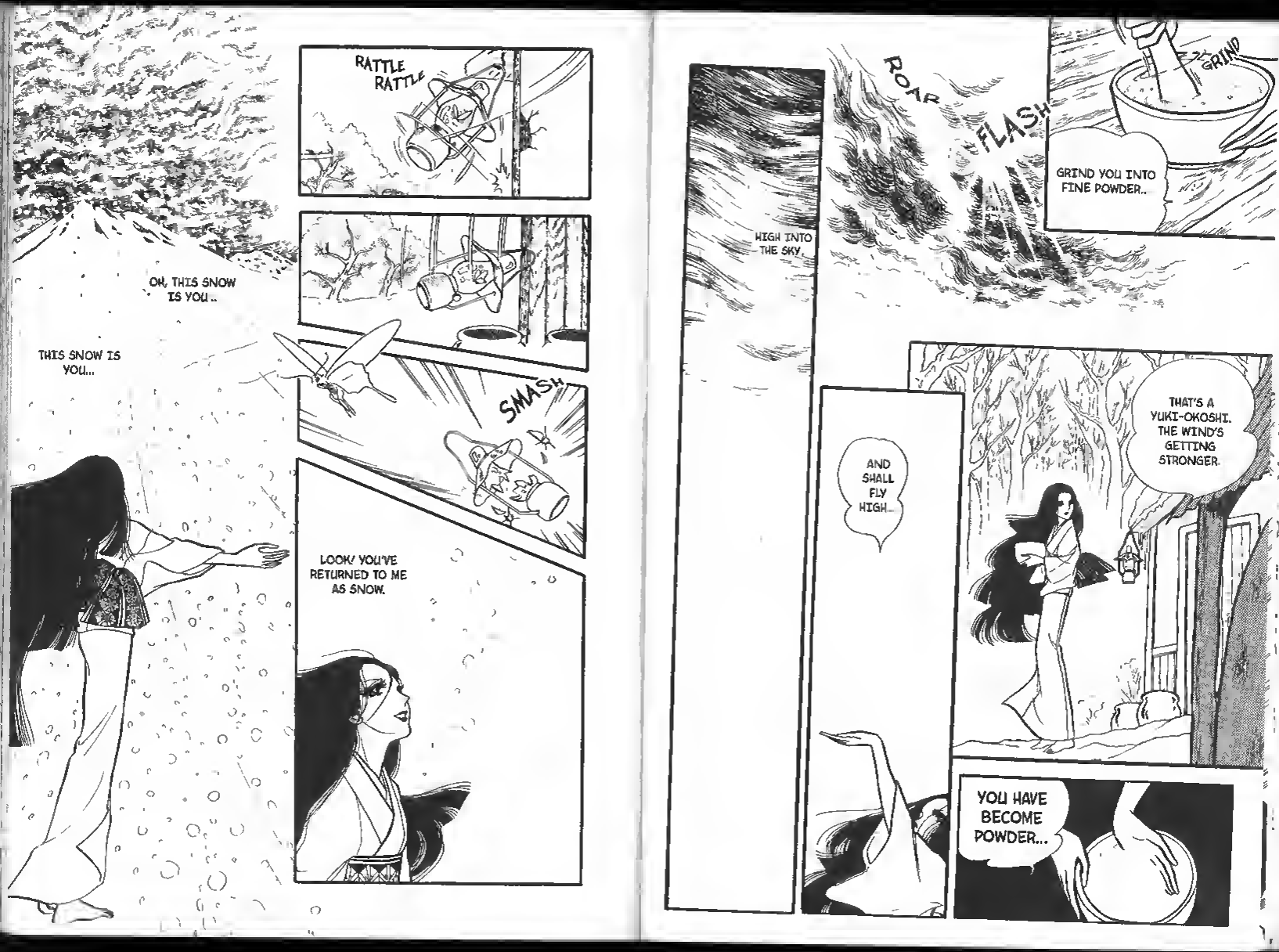
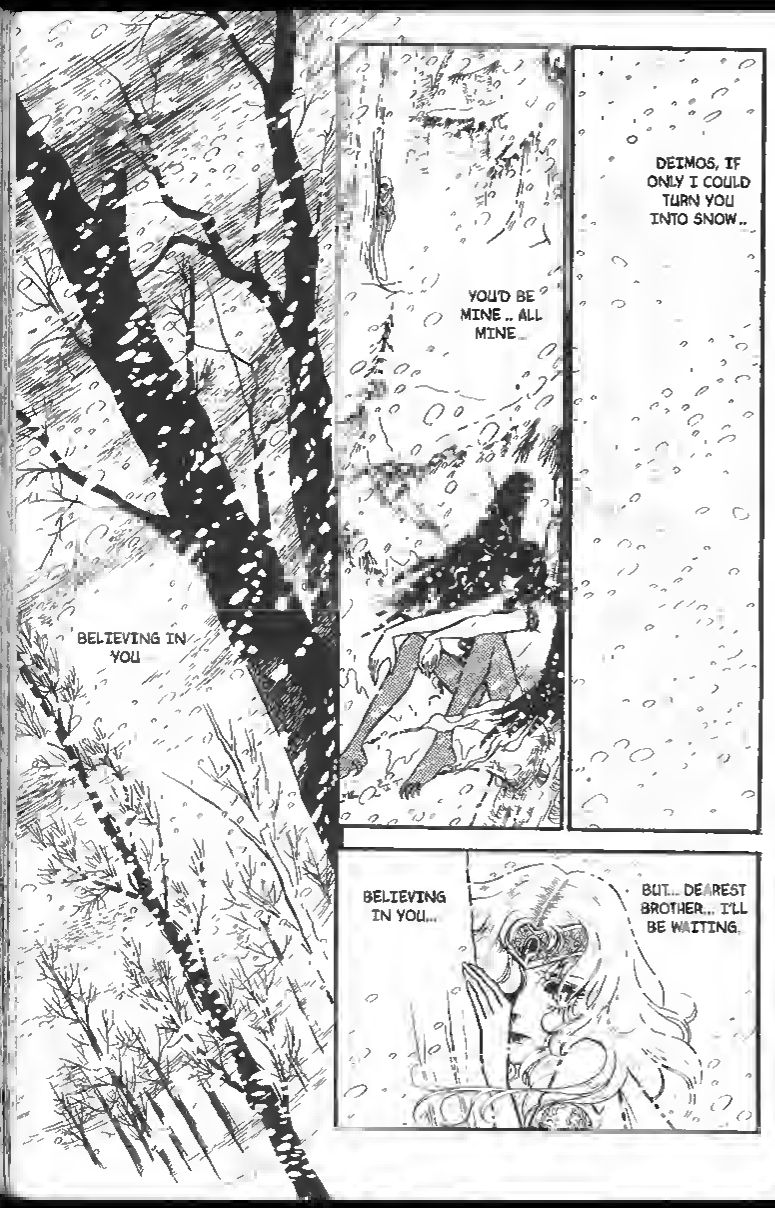
REIKO WAS STILL LOOKING FOR ME...
I HAVE TO AT LEAST APOLOGIZE TO HER. I'LL TELL HER ALL ABOUT YOU
IT'S ALL A LIE...

WOOOSH
CRUMBLE
BAM
BAM
BAM
AND GRIND YOUR BONES INSTEAD OF RED OXIDE...
GRIND GRIND
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS.
BURN YOUR BODY..
GRAB

YOU THINK I'M GONNA LET YOU GO?
GRIP
CLONK
YOUR HEART IS WITH HER. YOU CAN'T SEE ME ANYMORE.
I'LL BE BACK RIGHT AWAY.
SMASH
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!


RATTLE RATTLE
SMASH
OH, THIS SNOW IS YOU..
THIS SNOW IS YOU...
LOOK! YOU'VE RETURNED TO ME AS SNOW.
ROAR
FLASH
GRIND
GRIND YOU INTO FINE POWDER..
HIGH INTO THE SKY..
AND SHALL FLY HIGH..
THAT'S A YUKI-OKOSHI. THE WIND'S GETTING STRONGER.
YOU HAVE BECOME POWDER...


BELIEVING IN YOU
YOU'D BE MINE .. ALL MINE
DEIMOS, IF ONLY I COULD TURN YOU INTO SNOW..
BELIEVING IN YOU...
BUT... DEAREST BROTHER... I'LL BE WAITING.

HOLD ME... STRONGER...
PLEASE DON'T GO...
OH . YOU ARE MINE_
ALL MINE_

SWAP
AAAHH...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RUMI!
AH

Bride Of Deimos

TULIP GRAVE

IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL DECORATE MY ROOM WITH THESE FLOWERS.
RUMI, THIS IS FROM MAMA AND ME.
IT'S GORGEOUS!
HOW PRECIOUS! A PEARL NECKLACE!

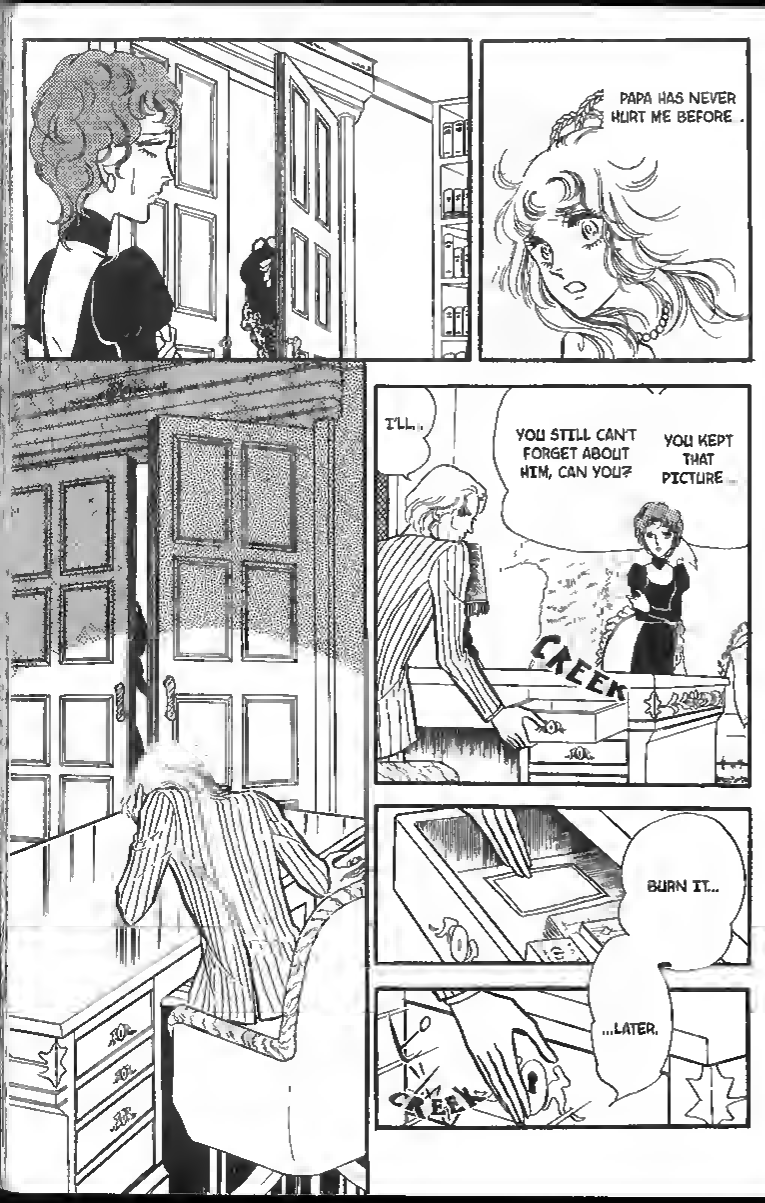
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!
TOSS
I DON'T LIKE TULIPS
I'M SORRY, MINAKO.
I'M...
OH, I DIDN'T KNOW.
I'M SO SORRY.
THEY MAKE ME ILL AT EASE. I GET A HEADACHE.

RIP
REALLY? LET ME SEE.
HM? THESE PAGES ARE GLUED TOGETHER
YOU WERE ADORABLE
FLIP

HEE HEE. THEY WANT ME TO GROW UP TO BE AN ELEGANT LADY!
THEY LOOK BEAUTIFUL ON YOU! YOU'RE BLESSED TO HAVE SUCH CARING PARENTS, RUMI
IN WHICH CASE I SHALL REVEAL MY CHILDHOOD PHOTOS, ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!
OH, HOW EMBARRASSING!
HAHA!
I HARDLY REMEMBER THOSE DAYS.

AH...!
I'LL GO ASK MY MOTHER
LOOK AT ALL THE TULIPS...
I WONDER WHO IT IS
WHO IS HE?
IT WAS IN MY PHOTO ALBUM
WHERE DID YOU FIND IT?
I... I DON'T KNOW..

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU!
OH I KNOW! IT'S YOU FATHER WHEN YOU WERE A KID.
GIVE THAT TO ME!
WHAT'S WRONG MAMA...? PAPA...?


PAPA HAS NEVER HURT ME BEFORE.
I'LL...
YOU STILL CAN'T FORGET ABOUT HIM, CAN YOU?
YOU KEPT THAT PICTURE...
CREEK
BURN IT...
...LATER.
CREEK

PAPA...
YOU LIE!
IT'S MY FRIEND'S CHILD.
THIS... HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, RUMI.
IT'S..
IF IT WERE NOTHING, YOU WOULDN'T BE SO FLUSTERED.
SLAP
PAPA SLAPPED ME...
GO TO YOUR ROOM, RUMI.

SEIRYO SCHOOL
WELCOMING PARTY FOR NEW STUDENTS
TEA
DANGO
FAMOUS SNACKS
PERHAPS THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT PHOTO AND MY HATE TOWARDS TULIPS.
THE BOY AND THE TULIPS..
THERE MUST BE SOME SORT OF SECRET BEHIND THAT PICTURE.
HOW ABOUT SOME CUTE ACCESSORIES?
COME ON EVERYBODY! THE UDON HERE IS CHEAP AND TASTY!
FIFTY YEN FOR ONE BOWL!
BASEBALL CLUB'S SPECIAL STAMINA SOUP! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN IT!
UDON
OUR CLASS' BEAUTY QUEEN WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE SURPRISE HOUSE!
HEY! HEY!
COFFEE
ORIGINAL SORIES
WHAT'S WRONG, RUMI?
YOU WERE SO EXCITED ABOUT THIS WELCOMING PARTY.
DEVIL'S CLUB
HEY, DO YOU WANT SOME ANMITSU?
I WONDER WHAT THAT IS.

DEVIL'S CLUB
SEEING THAT THERE BEFORE...
I DON'T REMEMBER...
?
WANT TO GO IN?
ZENZAI
UM... OKAY..
ANOTHER CURTAIN...
THERE'S ONLY ONE CANDLE.
GEEZ, IT'S DARK.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
DEIMOS!
I FIGURED I'D MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM BY OPENING A STAND OF MY OWN.
THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD THAT WANT TO MEET THE DEVIL.
LET'S GO.
OF COURSE NOT.
MINAKO, DO YOU KNOW HIM?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU

RUMI!
IF YOU WISH ME TO, YES.
YOU CAN DO THAT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'VE HEARD THAT THE DEVIL IS CAPABLE OF MAKING HUMAN DESIRES AND WISHES COME TRUE.
THAT PICTURE!
MINAKO, I'M SERIOUS. I CAN USE THE DEVIL'S HELP.
RUMI DON'T! WE SHOULDN'T GET INVOLVED IN THIS.

PLEASE. I'D LIKE TO MEET THIS BOY
I TOOK THE PHOTO FROM MY FATHER'S DESK DRAWER.
I'VE BEEN BOTHERED BY THIS BOY EVER SINCE...
I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING I HAVE
I DON'T MIND.
IF YOU'RE WILLING TO SACRIFICE THAT WHICH IS MOST PRECIOUS
CAN YOU HELP ME OR NOT?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO REGRET THIS?

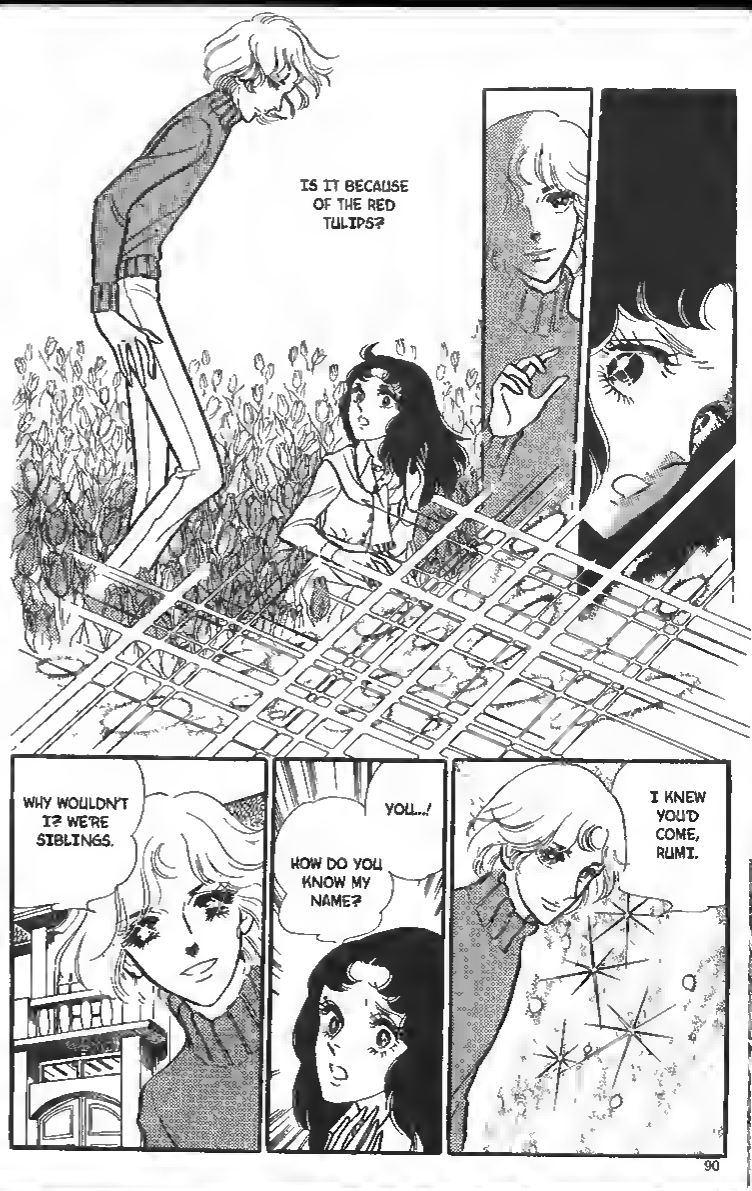
YOU SHOULD JOIN HER AND SEE FOR YOURSELF
ABSOLUTELY!
WAIT! YOU MUSTN'T GO!
RUMI!
DON'T STOP HER, MINAKO.

FLICK
NO!
IT'S THE SAME PLACE.
I CAN SEE THE BOY IF I GO THERE?
IT'S TWO HOURS FROM HERE IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

YOU MUST BE IN PAIN.
YEAH. MY MIGRAINES... I FEEL ILL.
BUT SINCE THAT DAY I FEEL AS THOUGH THAT BOY IS CALLING ME.
I CAN'T IGNORE IT.
THERE'S SOME-ONE THERE.
HE MAY KNOW ABOUT THIS HOUSE.
I'LL GO ASK HIM.

THE PATH SHE TAKES TO HER DEATH IS LIKE A PRELUDE TO YOUR DESTINY
WE'RE HERE AT LAST. ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY WITH THIS RUMI?

SIBLINGS...?
A YOUNG BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL.
THEY WERE SO CUTE TOGETHER, THE BROTHER AND SISTER.
THEY ALL LIVED HERE...
HA HA!
OKAY, YOU READY?
AGAIN! DO IT AGAIN!
AGAIN!


IS IT BECAUSE OF THE RED TULIPS?
WHY WOULDN'T IT? WE'RE SIBLINGS.
YOU...!
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
I KNEW YOU'D COME, RUMI.

HERE WE GO!
SSSWHZZZ
AAAH!
WHOOM

THIS RED TULIP IS THE SAME COLOR AS YOUR SWEATER
LOOK!
HAHAHA..
HEHE...
ME TOO. I LOVE YOU THE MOST!
JUST LIKE I LOVE YOU THE MOST.
I DON'T KNOW.
WHY?
I LOVE TULIPS THE MOST.

SHE'S NOT MY MAMA!
WHY DO YOU CALL MAMA AUNTIE?
YEAH!
MORE THAN PAPA AND AUNTIE?
SHE'S NOT MY MAMA!

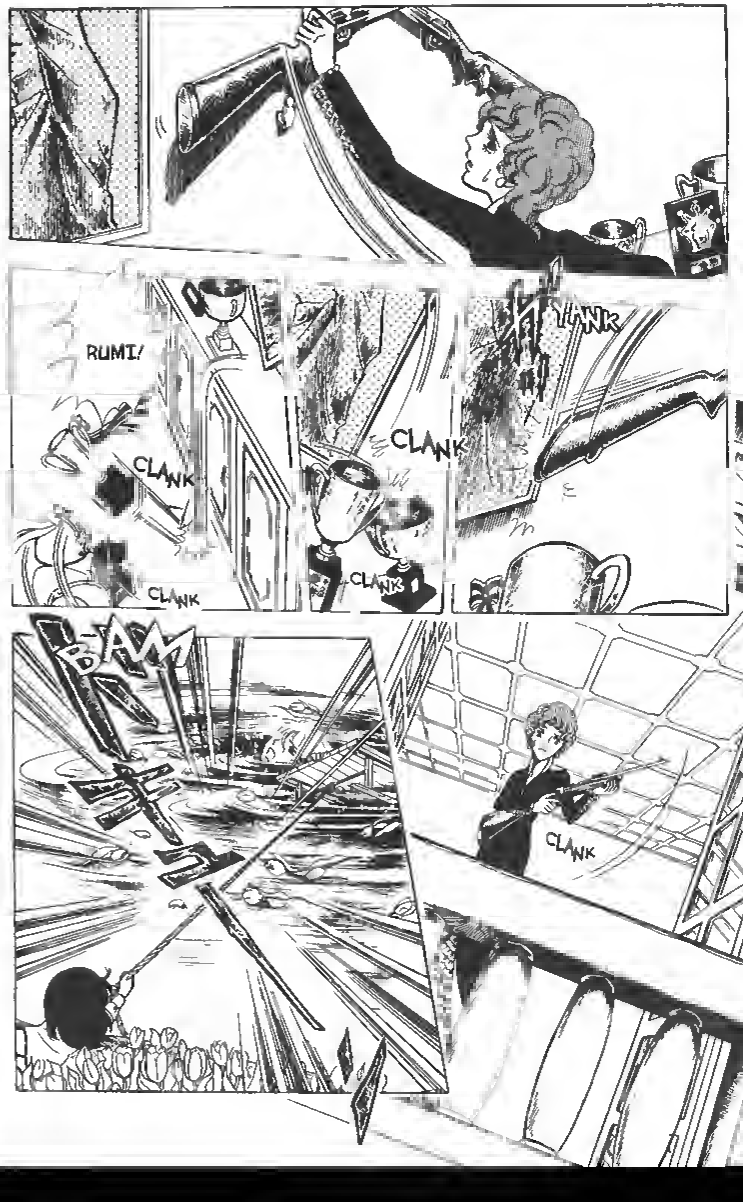
HIS FATHER SOON REMARRIED BUT..
THE BOY'S BIOLOGICAL MOTHER PASSED AWAY WHEN HE WAS FOUR.
THE BOY DID NOT TAKE EASILY TO HIS STEP-MOTHER.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU RUMI, I'D LEAVE THIS HOUSE.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY HUSBAND!
AND WHEN WE GROW UP, I'M GONNA TAKE YOU AS MY BRIDE.
DON'T WORRY. WE'RE ALWAYS GONNA BE TOGETHER.
DON'T GO!
NO!

IT'S A LEAF RING. A SYMBOL OF MY PROMISE.
PINKY SWEAR!
THIS IS CALLED THE TULIP RIDE.
MY TURN!
SSSHHHZZZZZ
WEEEE!
I CAN'T STOP!
AAAAHH
ACK!
TRIP

SPLASH
HE'S DROWNING! NO!!!
MAMA! HELP!
SLIIIDE
NO! HE'S GONNA...
SPLASH
RUMI! RUMI! LET GO OF THE ROPE!
LET GO OF THE ROPE!
COUGH
YOU'RE... YOU'RE GONNA...
RUMI... RUMI'S GONNA...
NOOO!

WOOOA
SPLASH
SLIIIDE
NO...

THUD
AAAH!


RUMI!
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
YANK
BAM
CLANK

THE POND WAS SEALED OVER, AND THE FATHER PLANTED A TULIP GARDEN.
A TULIP GRAVE.
THE FAMILY RETURNS HERE EVERY ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOY'S DEATH
THAT SHE SUBCONSCIOUSLY REPRESSED ALL HER CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.
THE POOR GIRL SUFFERED SO MUCH AT THE LOSS OF HER BROTHER. .
IT'S STRANGE. EVEN WHEN I PLANT WHITE TULIP BULBS, THEY ALL TURN RED.
HAH
AND IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT HE WAS WEARING A RED SWEATER THAT DAY.
THE REPRESSED MEMORIES OF HER BROTHER SURFACED AS HATERED FOR TULIPS.

NOOO!
I COULDN'T LET RUMI... RUMI...
FORGIVE ME HONEY. I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE.
I KNOW
THE BOY'S BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED.
FOR SOME REASON...

THE BOY IN THE RED SWEATER.../
SOMETHING WRONG?
IT'S DARK AND LONELY UNDER THESE TULIPS.
I'M SORRY. YOU MUST HAVE RESENTED MAMA AND ME.
I REMEMBER NOW/ YOU'RE MY BROTHER/
YOU'RE HERE
BUT IT'S OKAY NOW
I STILL HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR PROMISE

ARE YOU SURE?
THAT WE'D BE HUSBAND AND WIFE WHEN WE GREW UP
OF COURSE /
UNDER MY FAVORITE FLOWERS .. WITH MY FAVORITE PERSON. .
COME TO ME. /
RUMI/ YOU CAN'T GO WITH HIM/

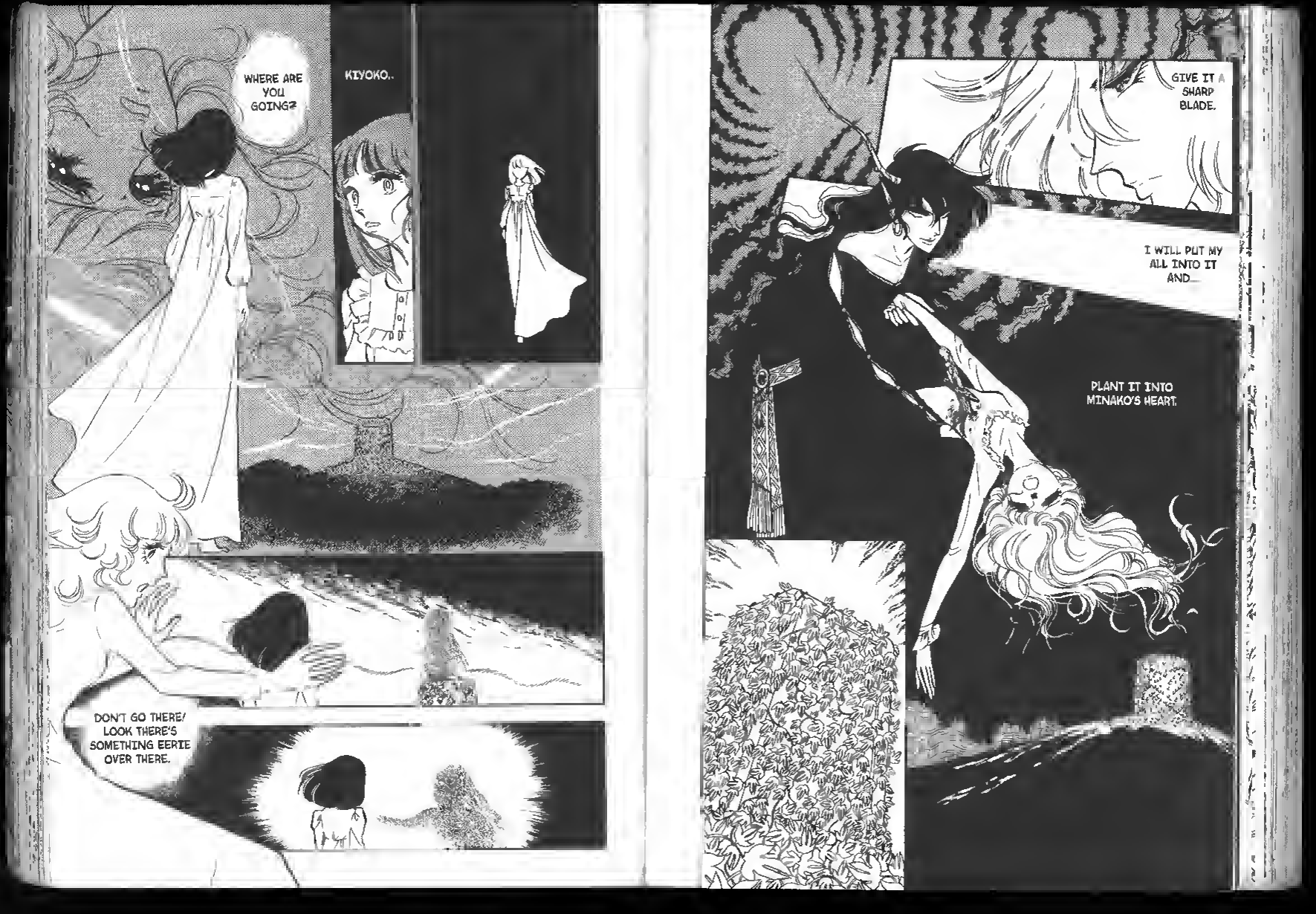
BECAUSE— BECAUSE—
NO.
RUMI SHALL NEVER RETURN TO THIS WORLD AGAIN—
THIS MUST BE A NIGHTMARE. RUMI WILL RETURN TOMORROW
A NIGHT-MARE

SLAM
YOU'RE GONNA SACRIFICE YOUR OWN LIFE! THAT'S THE DEAL YOU MADE WITH THE DEVIL!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHO'S THAT?
RUMI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
RUMI!
UNDER MY FAVORITE FLOWERS...
WITH MY FAVORITE PERSON—

THE BLOODSTAINED COUNTESS
WHEREFORE ART THOU, RUMI?
CRADLED BY THE FIRE OF TULIPS.
BUT RATHER RUMI'S PEARLS
IT'S NOT DEW THAT THESE TULIPS ARE CRADLING...
AND ONE DAY...
THE SAME JOURNEY MAY BE AWAITING ME...

A SWORD...
A BEFITTING WEAPON TO KILL THE LOVE OF MY LIFE...
TAKING MINAKO'S REMAINS TO HADES IS MY PURPOSE... MY MISSION.
I HAVE NO HESITATION...
I SHALL GIVE THE SCENTED BRANCH A SHARP TIP.
I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE...
BUT TO DO IT!

ALOES WOOD - I SCRAPE THE KING OF FRAGRANT WOOD.
SCRAPE
SCRAPE SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
FALL
WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY BE MAKING?


WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
KIYOKO..
DON'T GO THERE! LOOK THERE'S SOMETHING EERIE OVER THERE.
GIVE IT A SHARP BLADE.
I WILL PUT MY ALL INTO IT AND...
PLANT IT INTO MINAKO'S HEART.

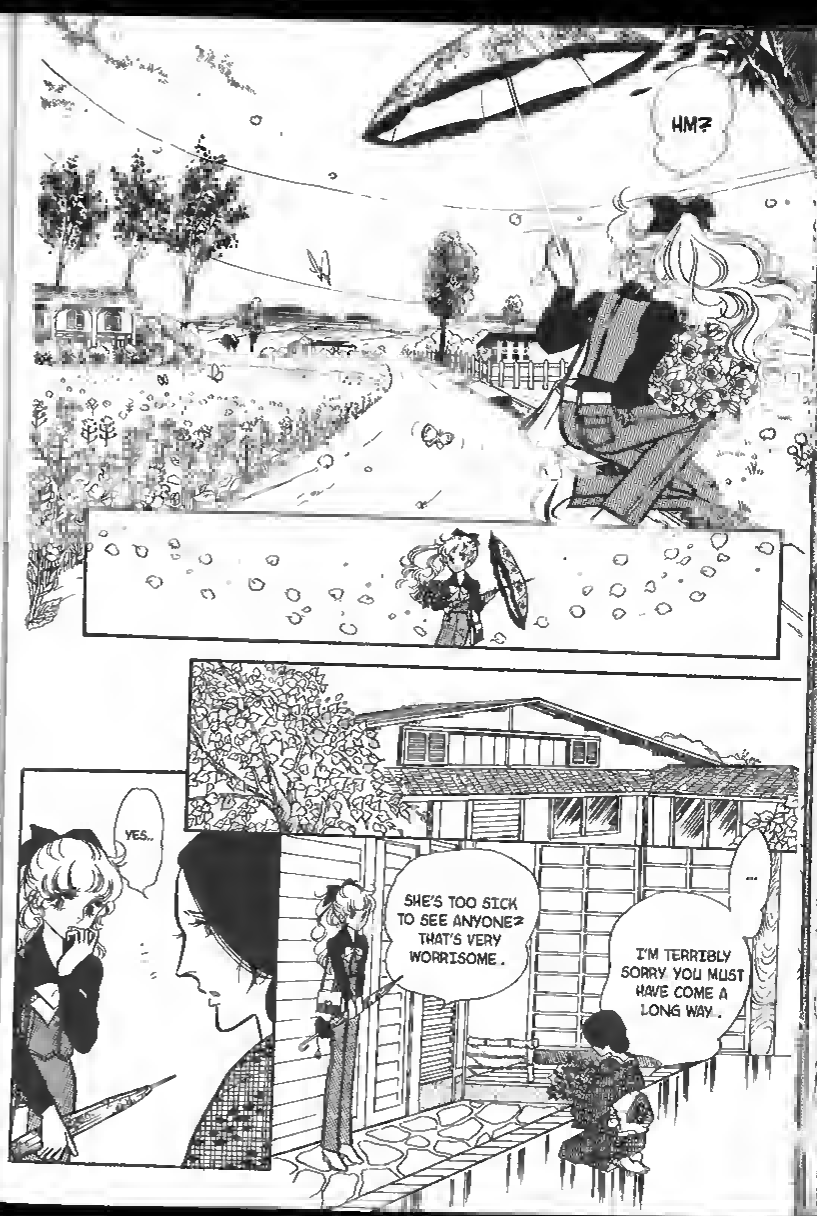
AAAAAHHHHH!
HAH!
PHEW... IT WAS A DREAM...
HAVING SUCH A DREAM ABOUT KIYOKO DISTURBS ME. SHE'S BEEN SICK AND OUT OF SCHOOL FOR DAYS.
I SHOULD GO SEE HER TOMORROW.

KIYOKO!
IT'S A VAMPIRE! A VAMPIRE!

MORIYA
ACK!
EXCUSE ME MA'AM/ WOULD YOU KNOW WHERE THE MORIYAS LIVE?
HALT

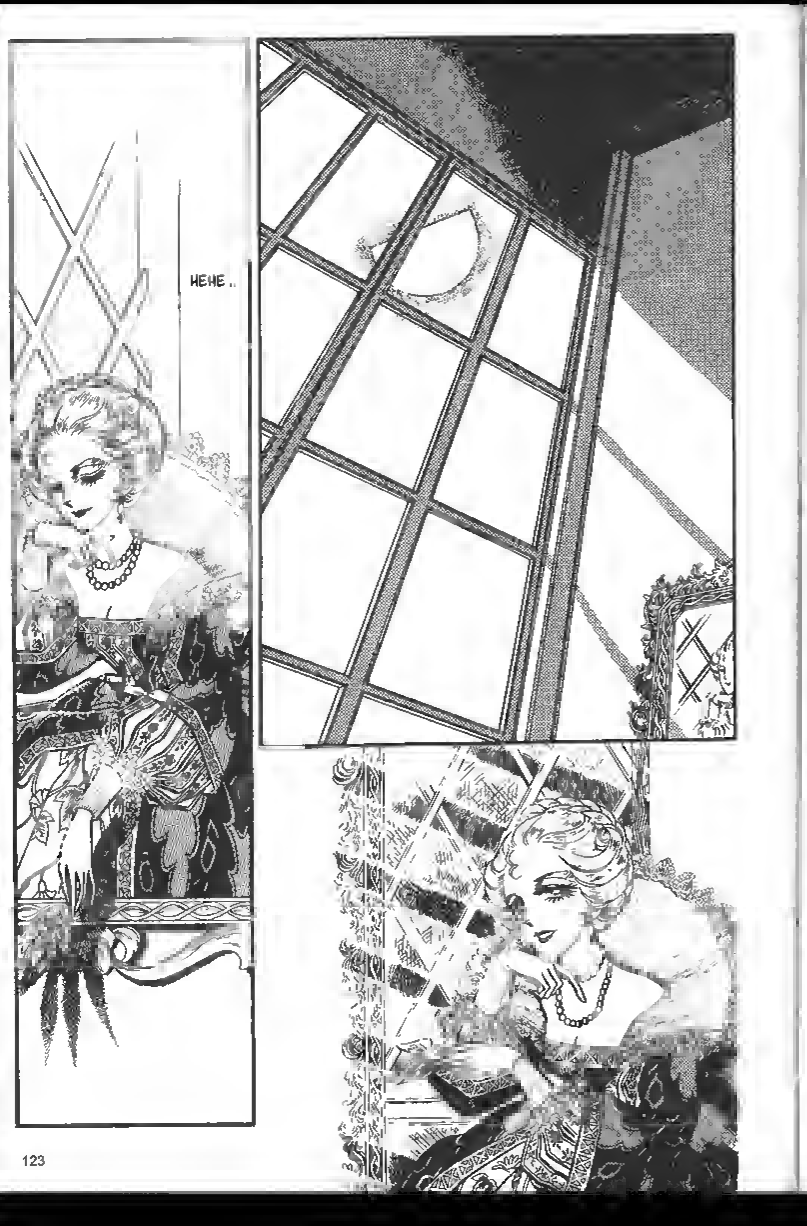
DRIFT
OH, DID I...?
HERE YOU GO/

SNAP
THIS?
ISN'T THAT KIYOKO'S PARASOL?
NO.
AN OLD LADY I MET ON THE ROAD LEFT IT BEHIND.
IT IS/ DID YOU RUN INTO HER ON THE ROAD?
I'M SORRY BUT. PLEASE LEAVE..
SHE WAS WEARING A FLOWER-PATTERNED DRESS A VERY UNIQUE OLD WOMAN.
SNIFF


HM?
YES..
SHE'S TOO SICK TO SEE ANYONE? THAT'S VERY WORRISOME.
...
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY YOU MUST HAVE COME A LONG WAY.

MY HUSBAND BOUGHT IT WHEN AN ANCIENT ROMANIAN CASTLE WAS PUT UP FOR AUCTION.
IT'S TITLED "MOONLIGHT NELLA."
WHAT A GORGEOUS PORTRAIT!
OH MY!

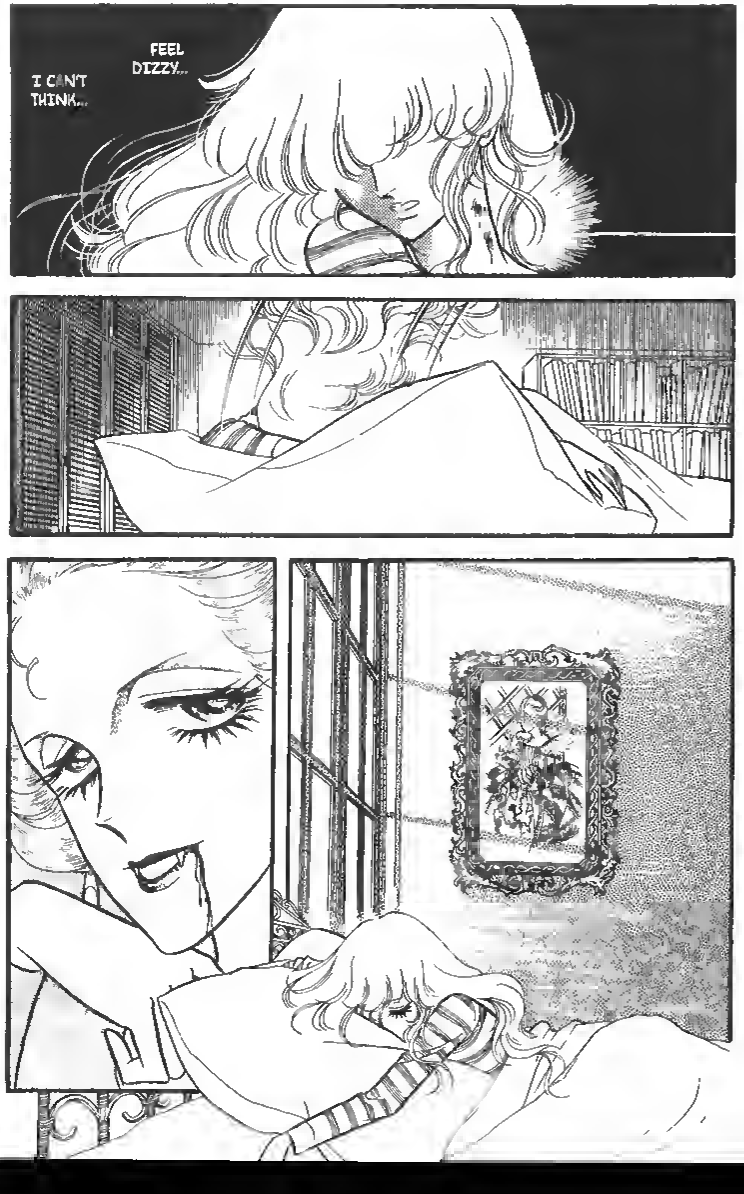
DEATH CERTIFICATE
KIYOKO
?
SHE WAS IN HER PRIME AND YET HER BODY WAS AS WRINKLED AS A HUNDRED YEAR-OLD WOMAN.
THE DOCTORS COULDN'T DETERMINE HER ILLNESS. SHE AGED AND HER WEIGHT DECLINED DAY BY DAY.
I COULDN'T TELL YOU THEN THAT THE OLD WOMAN YOU SAW WAS IN FACT, KIYOKO.
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST TO GIVE YOU HER MEMENTO
SINCE YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO HER...


HEHE..

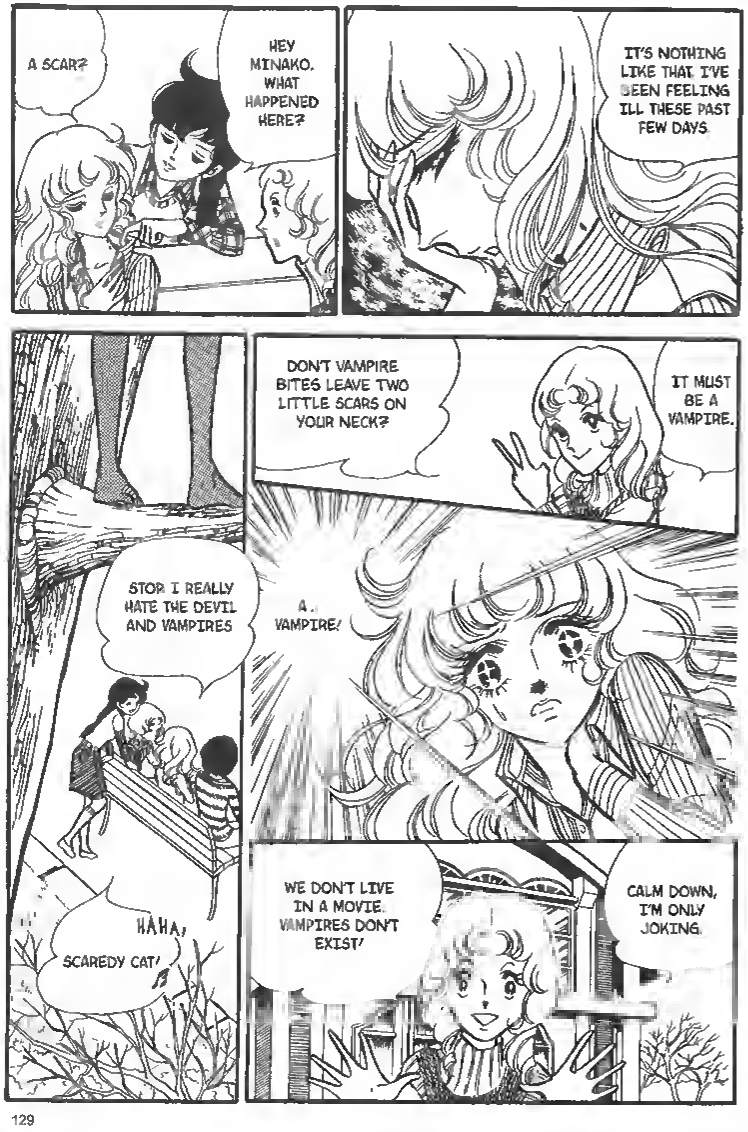
IT'S A PORTRAIT OF COUNTESS NELLA WHO USED TO OWN THE CASTLE
I BELIEVE THAT IN HER HAND IS A VERY RARE IVY THAT ONLY GREW NEAR THE CASTLE
OH YEAH.
I'VE NEVER SEEN IT IN JAPAN.
KIYOKO LOVED THAT PAINTING. SHE SAID IT LOOKED SO ALIVE WHEN THE MOON-LIGHT SHONE ON IT.
SHE HAD IT BY HER WINDOWSILL UNTIL THE DAY SHE DIED
I WILL CHERISH IT FOR KIYOKO.

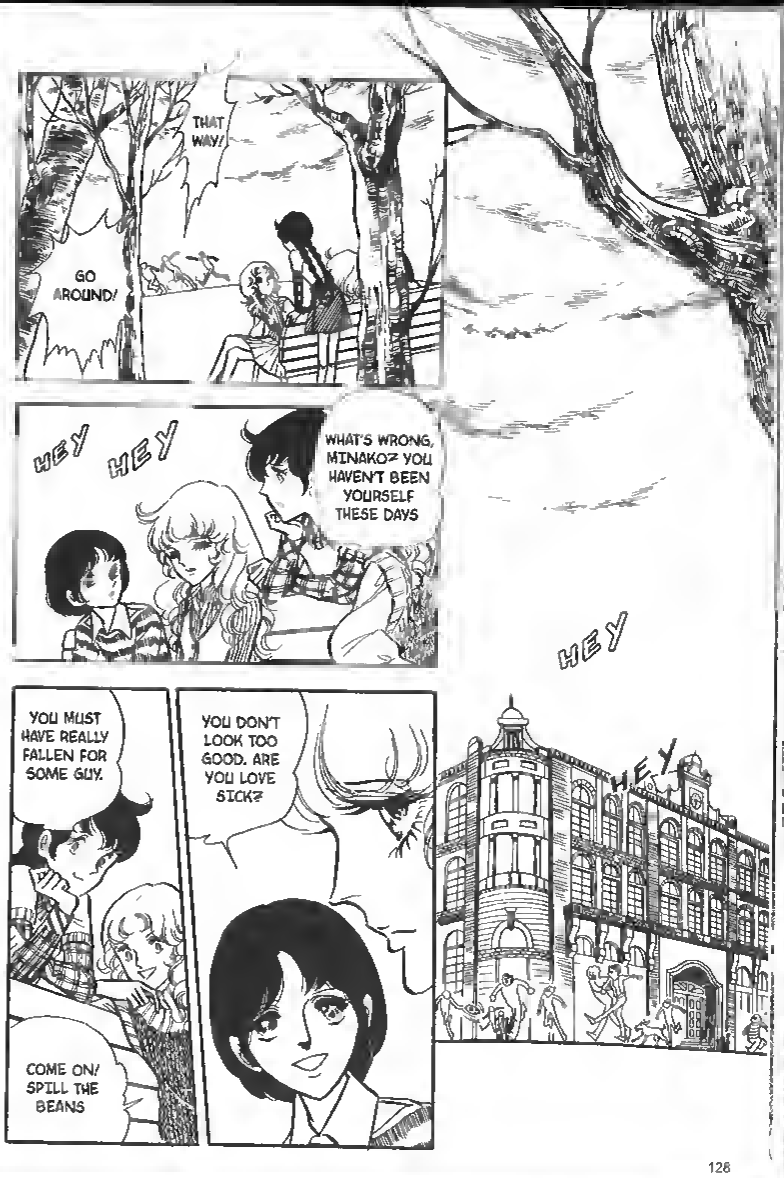
RED BLOOD... I WANT RED BLOOD...
I AM THE MOON-LIGHT NELLA...
HEHEHE
IT GIVES ME LIFE AND THE ENERGY TO SUCK RED BLOOD.
I LOVE THE MOON-LIGHT.
THE SOURCE OF MY LIFE...
MAKES ME HUNDREDS OF YEARS YOUNGER.
THE BLOOD OF YOUNG PRETTY GIRLS...

IT GIVES ME LIFE.
NGG. NGG.
BAM
NOOO!
AUH


I CAN'T THINK...
FEEL DIZZY...

I'M SURE I FELT SOMEONE'S WEIGHT ON MY CHEST.
THE WINDOW'S CLOSED. HOW COULD ANYONE BE IN HERE?
WHY AM I HAVING SO MANY NIGHTMARES THESE DAYS?
IT MUST HAVE BEEN ANOTHER NIGHTMARE...

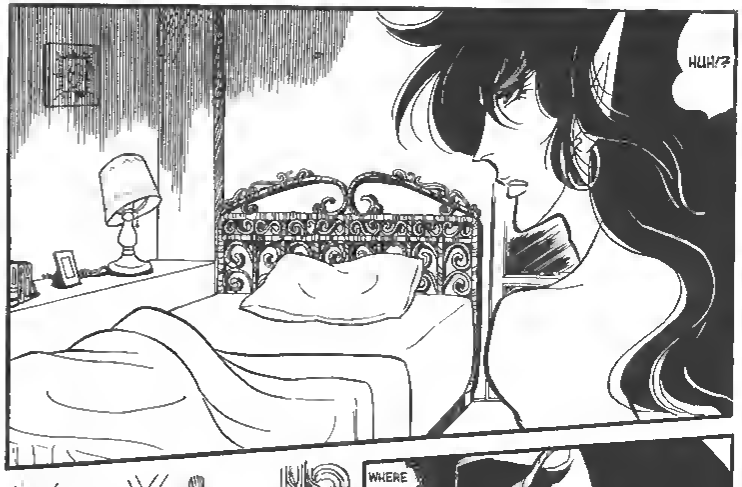

A SCAR?
HEY MINAKO. WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT I'VE BEEN FEELING ILL THESE PAST FEW DAYS.
DON'T VAMPIRE BITES LEAVE TWO LITTLE SCARS ON YOUR NECK?
IT MUST BE A VAMPIRE.
STOP! I REALLY HATE THE DEVIL AND VAMPIRES
A... VAMPIRE!
HAHA! SCAREDY CAT!
WE DON'T LIVE IN A MOVIE. VAMPIRES DON'T EXIST!
CALM DOWN, I'M ONLY JOKING.

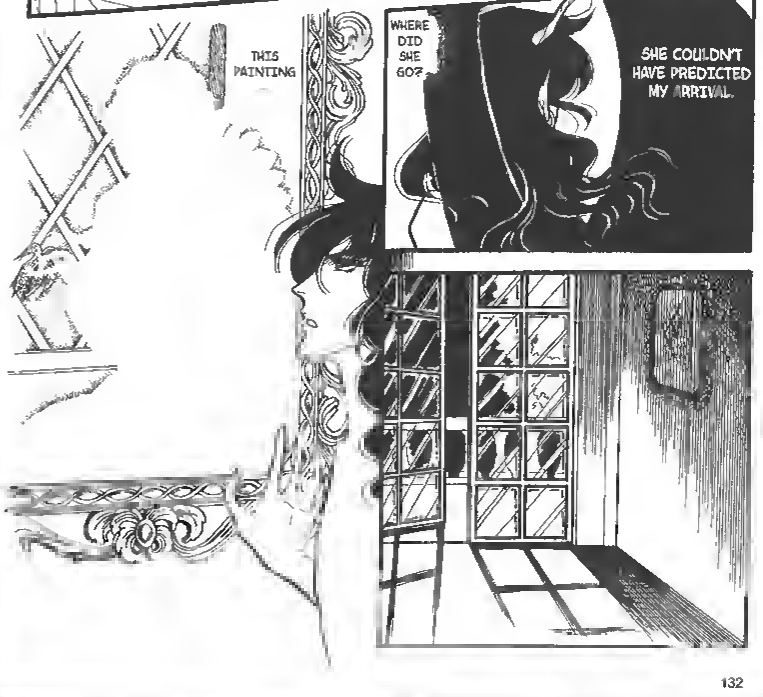

THAT WAY!
GO AROUND!
HEY
HEY
WHAT'S WRONG, MINAKO? YOU HAVEN'T BEEN YOURSELF THESE DAYS
HEY
YOU MUST HAVE REALLY FALLEN FOR SOME GUY.
YOU DON'T LOOK TOO GOOD. ARE YOU LOVE SICK?
COME ON! SPILL THE BEANS
HEY

SSST
TONIGHT WILL BE THE NIGHT...

MINAKO, I'VE GIVEN UP. I AM NOT WAITING FOR YOUR LOVE ANYMORE.
YOU HATE THEM, EH? HAHA...
ENJOY YOUR LAST DAY IN THIS WORLD
SNAP
FSH
TONIGHT/ YOU SHALL BECOME THE BRIDE OF DEIMOS

HAH!
NO ONE SHALL GET IN MY WAY
I DON'T LIKE WHAT I FEEL IN THE AIR.


HUH!?


THIS PAINTING
WHERE DID SHE GO?
SHE COULDN'T HAVE PREDICTED MY ARRIVAL.

WHAT A PRETTY GIRL.
YOU SHALL GROW OLD, WRINKLY AND DIE.
BUT YOUR YOUTH WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE INSIDE ME.
RUSTLE RUSTLE

MINAKO!
AHAHA

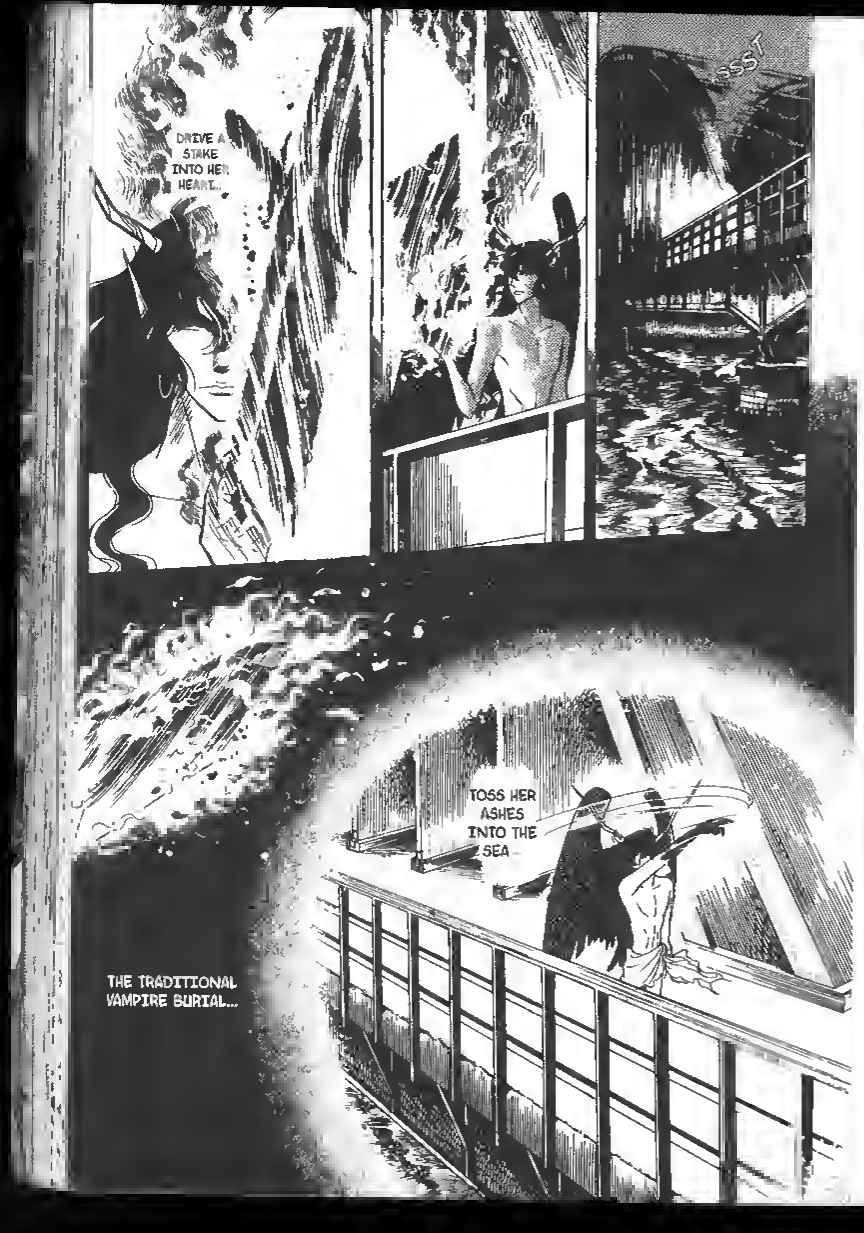
AS I SUCK HER BLOOD, SHE WILL AGE AND WRINKLE, APPEARING AS IF SHE WERE A HUNDRED YEARS OF AGE.
SHE WILL NO LONGER BE YOUNG AND PRETTY.
HEHEHE
TAKE YOUR WRINKLED BRIDE TO HADES OR WHEREVER YOU LIKE!
KUPUPUU
GIVE HER UP NOW, AND WATCH HER FALL PREY TO ME.
I WANT HER UNSULLIED

I'VE COME TO RESCUE MY BRIDE!
HAND HER TO ME, VAMPIRE!
YOU DESIRE HER REMAINS?
THEN YOU SHALL HAVE HER REMAINS
AFTER I DRAIN HER OF BLOOD.
INDEED! AND I SHALL TAKE HER TO HADES WITH THIS SWORD.
THE DEVIL WHO SQUIRMS AROUND IN THE DARK HAS A BRIDE?
AHA! YOU MUST BE JOKING.

FLING
I SAID UNSULLIED.
YOU'RE NOT GETTING IN MY WAY!
AUGH
B-BASTARD..!
NNNGGAAA.
GGAAAHH...
MY STRENGTH... IS... SEEPING AWAY INTO THE WOOD...
A SWORD MADE FROM SUCH CAN CLEANSE ALL EVIL
YOU JUST REALIZED NOW? THAT'S ALOES WOOD
NNGG
WOBBLE

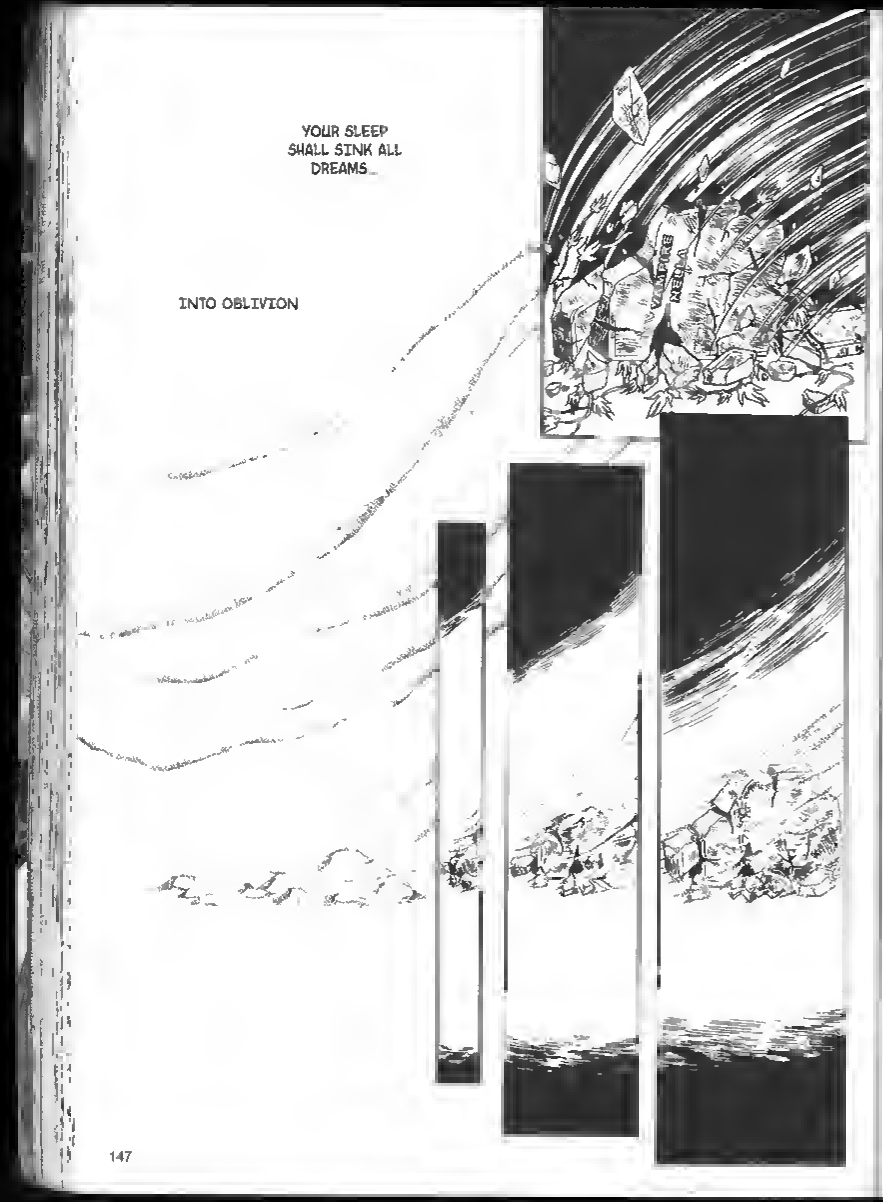
THE MOONLIGHT NELLA, THE VAMPIRE THAT WAS BURIED ALIVE THREE-HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
HER GRUDGE LIVED ON THROUGH HER PORTRAIT, SEEKING REVENGE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF YOUNG GIRLS.

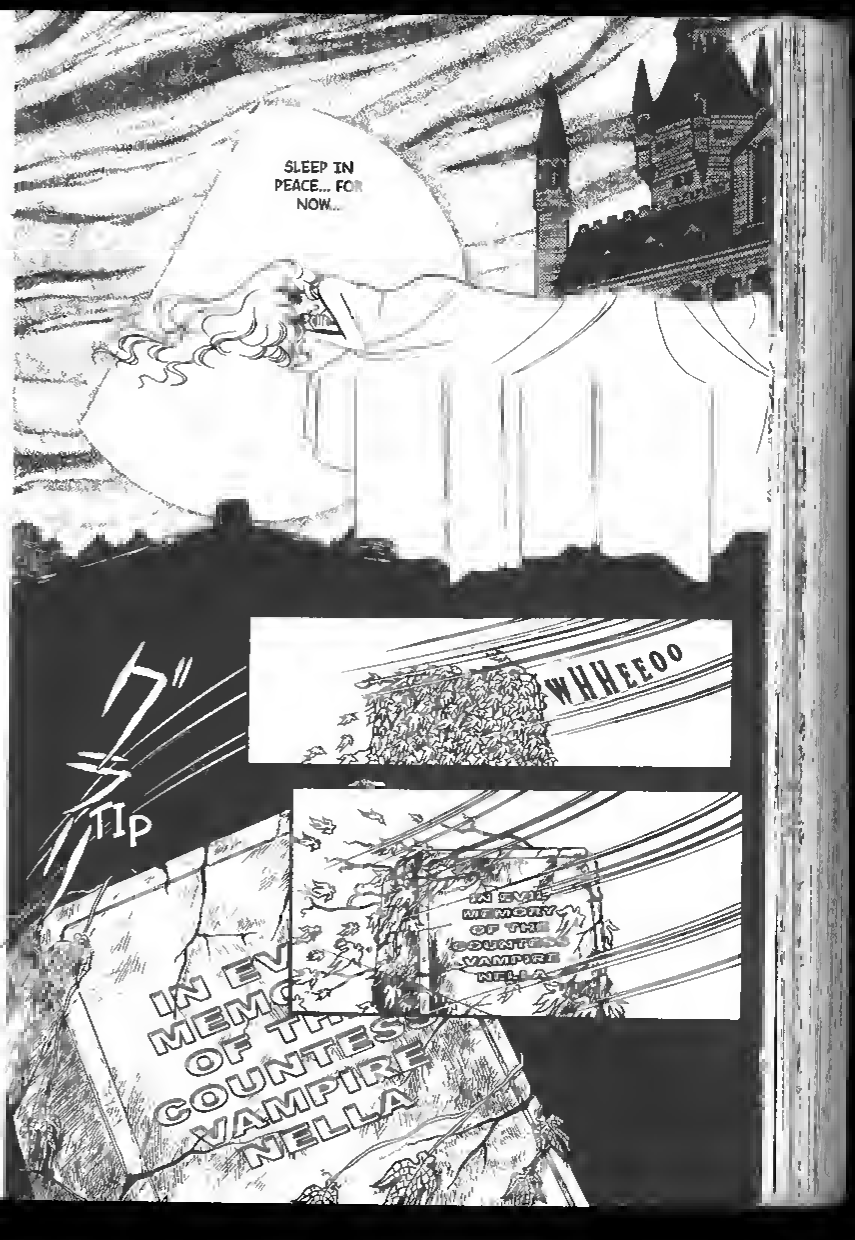
I MUST.. GO...
I MUST GO..
WOBBLE
AAUUHHH...

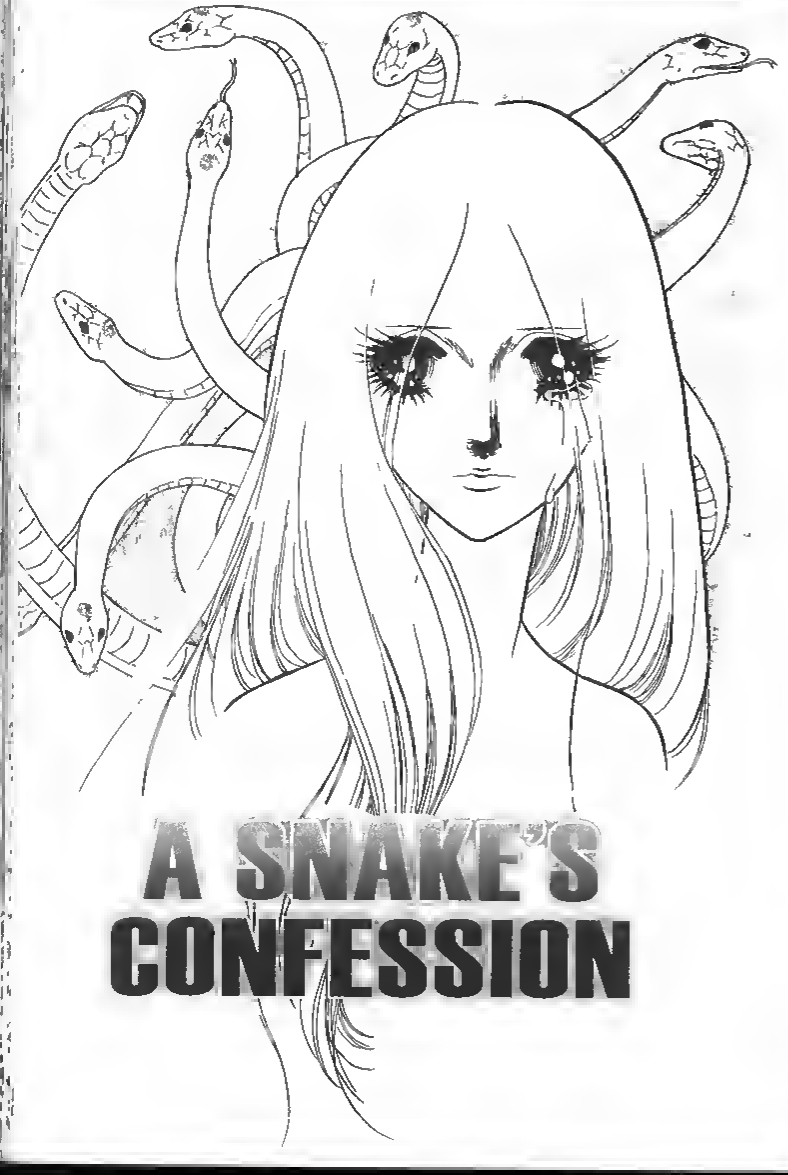

DRIVE A STAKE INTO HER HEART...
SSST
TOSS HER ASHES INTO THE SEA
THE TRADITIONAL VAMPIRE BURIAL...

FALL

HOW DISHEART-ENING.
MEMEMEM


YOUR SLEEP SHALL SINK ALL DREAMS...
INTO OBLIVION

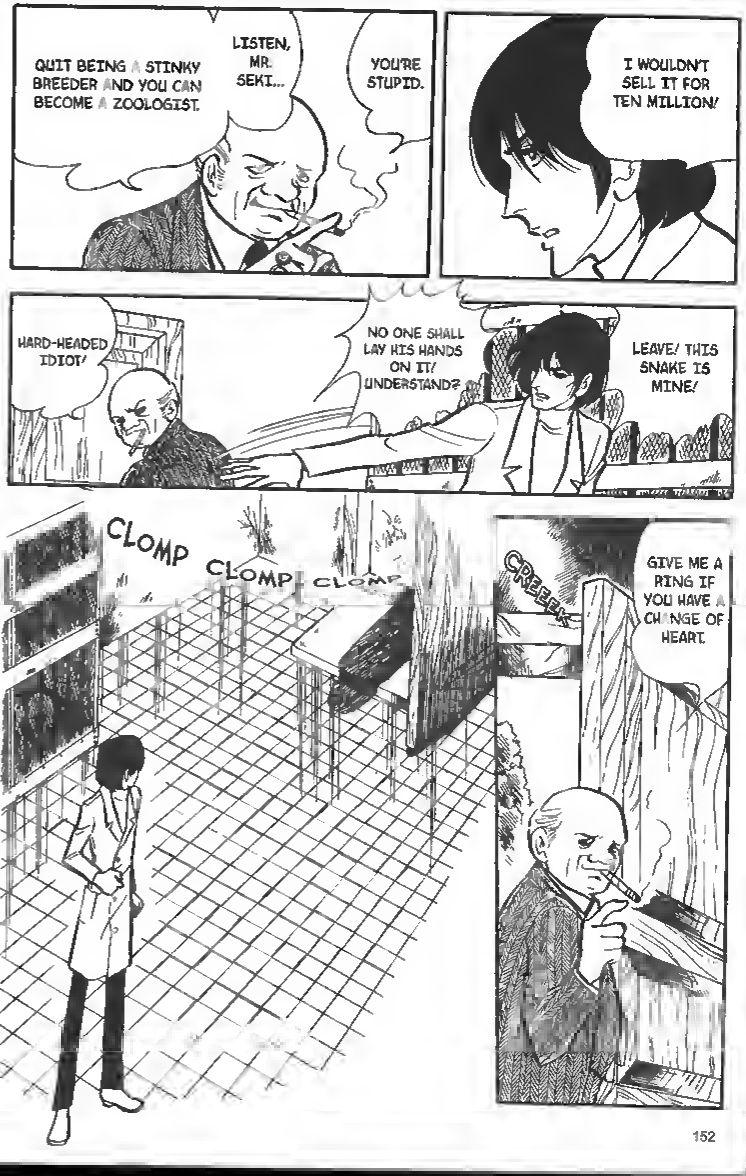

SLEEP IN PEACE... FOR NOW...
WHEEOO
TIP
IN EVIL MEMORY OF THE COUNTESS VAMPIRE NELLA



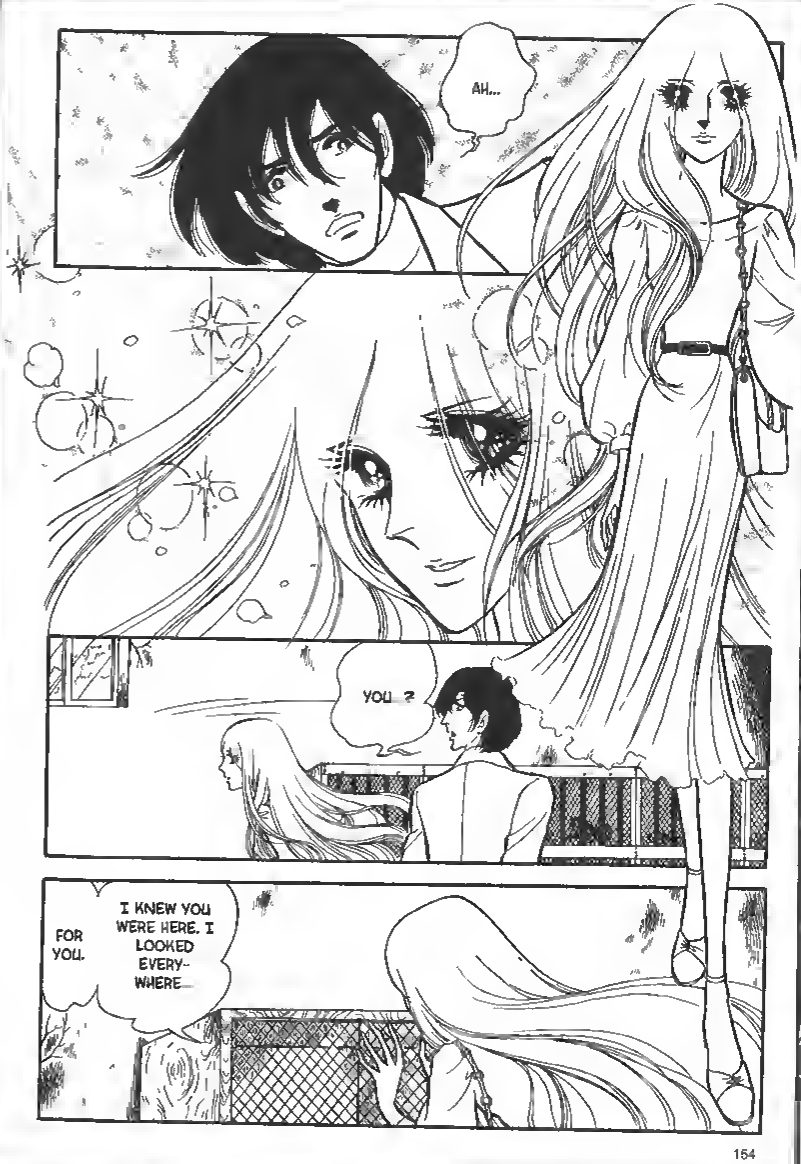
A SNAKE'S CONFESSION

IT IS SAID THAT SNAKES BRING GREAT FORTUNE
THAT'S WHY I WANT IT
THIS IS A MAGATAMA SNAKE. IT'S AN EXTREMELY RARE SPECIES!
I WANT TO BUY IT
IF I CAN MAKE THIS RARE SNAKE INTO A STUFFED SPECIMEN, FOR GENERATIONS TO COME, MY FAMILY WILL BE BLESSED AND PROSPEROUS
I HAVE A LOT OF RESEARCH TO DO ON IT
IT TOOK ME TWO WINTERS IN THE MOUNTAINS TO CATCH IT
NO!

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
A STUFFED SPECI-MEN!?

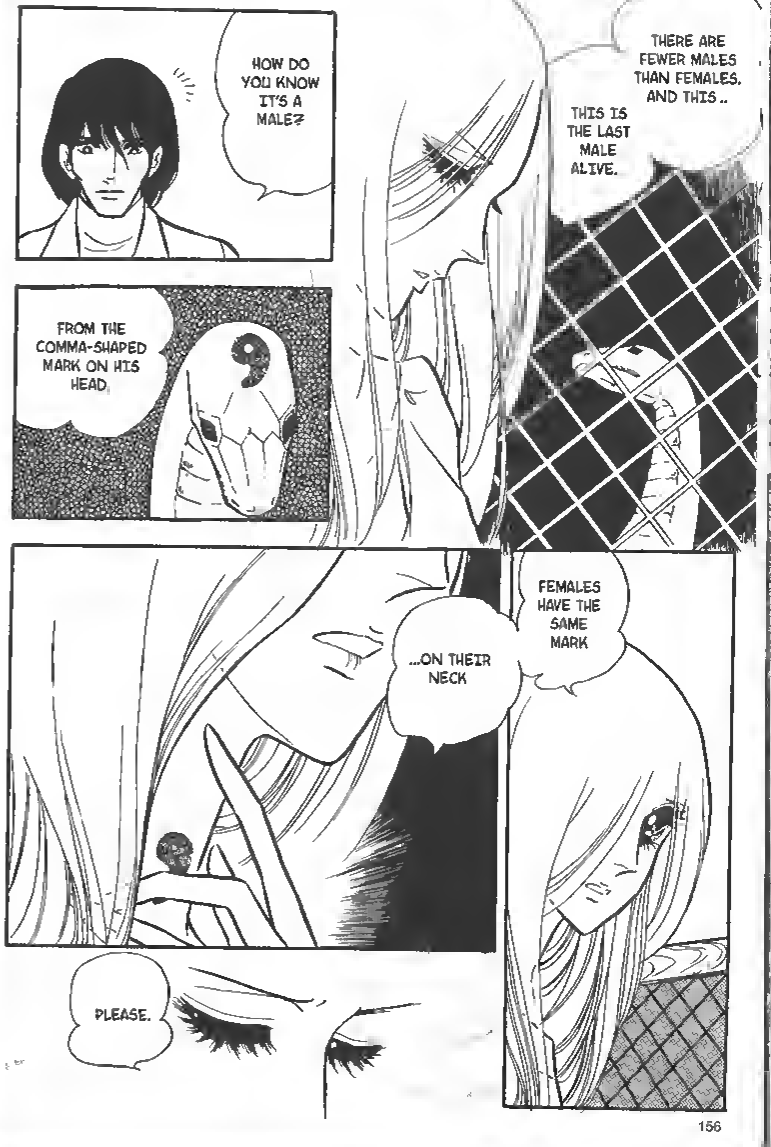

QUIT BEING A STINKY BREEDER AND YOU CAN BECOME A ZOOLOGIST.
LISTEN, MR. SEKI...
YOU'RE STUPID.
I WOULDN'T SELL IT FOR TEN MILLION!
HARD-HEADED IDIOT!
NO ONE SHALL LAY HIS HANDS ON IT! UNDERSTAND?
LEAVE! THIS SNAKE IS MINE!
CLOMP
CLOMP
CLOMP
CREEEK
GIVE ME A RING IF YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART.

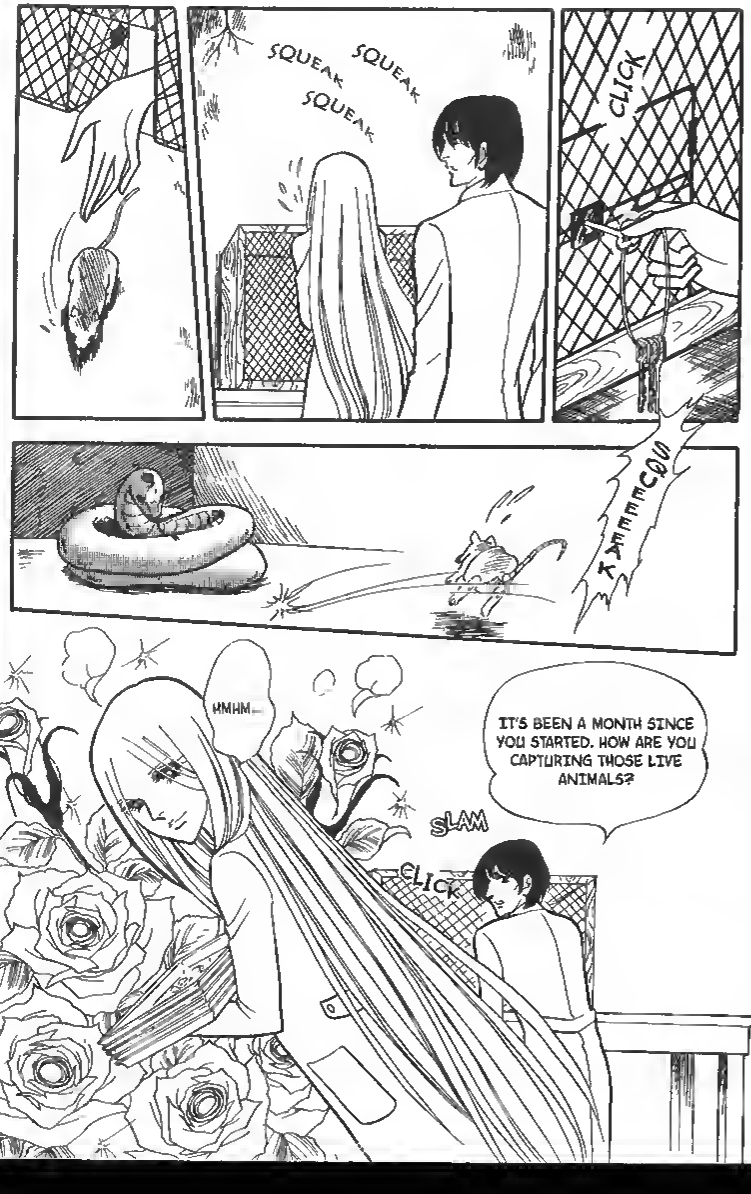
CREEEK
HM!
CREEEK
I'M NOT GIVING THIS SNAKE UP!
LEAVE ALREADY!


AH...
YOU...?
I KNEW YOU WERE HERE. I LOOKED EVERY-WHERE...
FOR YOU.

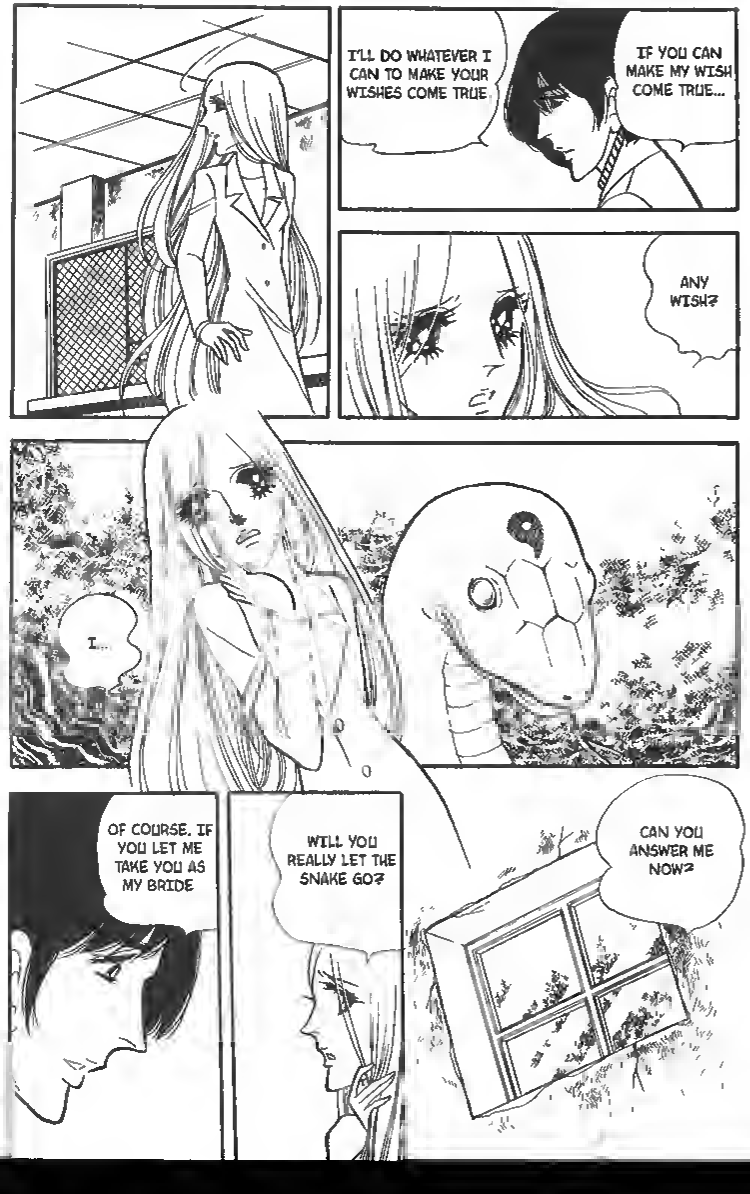
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? STOP!
OPEN!
IT DOESN'T OPEN!
CLANG CLANG
CLANG
PLEASE
PLEASE GIVE ME THIS SNAKE.
YOU MUST KNOW
THAT THE MAGATAMA SNAKES ARE THREATENED BY EXTINCTION.
WHY SHOULD I GIVE MY SNAKE AWAY TO A STRANGER?
WHO ARE YOU?
I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, BUT WE HAVE TO LET THE SNAKE GO

I CAN'T ALLOW THAT.
OUT
PLEASE RETURN HIM TO HIS KIND
OTHERWISE THEY'LL GO EXTINCT.
CLANK
I WON'T LET HIM GO UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.
NO! HE WON'T LIKE THAT
HERE YOU GO, DEAR.
REGAIN YOUR STRENGTH AND SOON
RIBBIT
YOU HAVE TO FEED HIM LIVE ANIMALS.


HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S A MALE?
THERE ARE FEWER MALES THAN FEMALES. AND THIS..
THIS IS THE LAST MALE ALIVE.
FROM THE COMMA-SHAPED MARK ON HIS HEAD.
...ON THEIR NECK
FEMALES HAVE THE SAME MARK
PLEASE.


SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
CLICK
KAMMMGOU
HMHM...
IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE YOU STARTED. HOW ARE YOU CAPTURING THOSE LIVE ANIMALS?
SLAM
CLICK

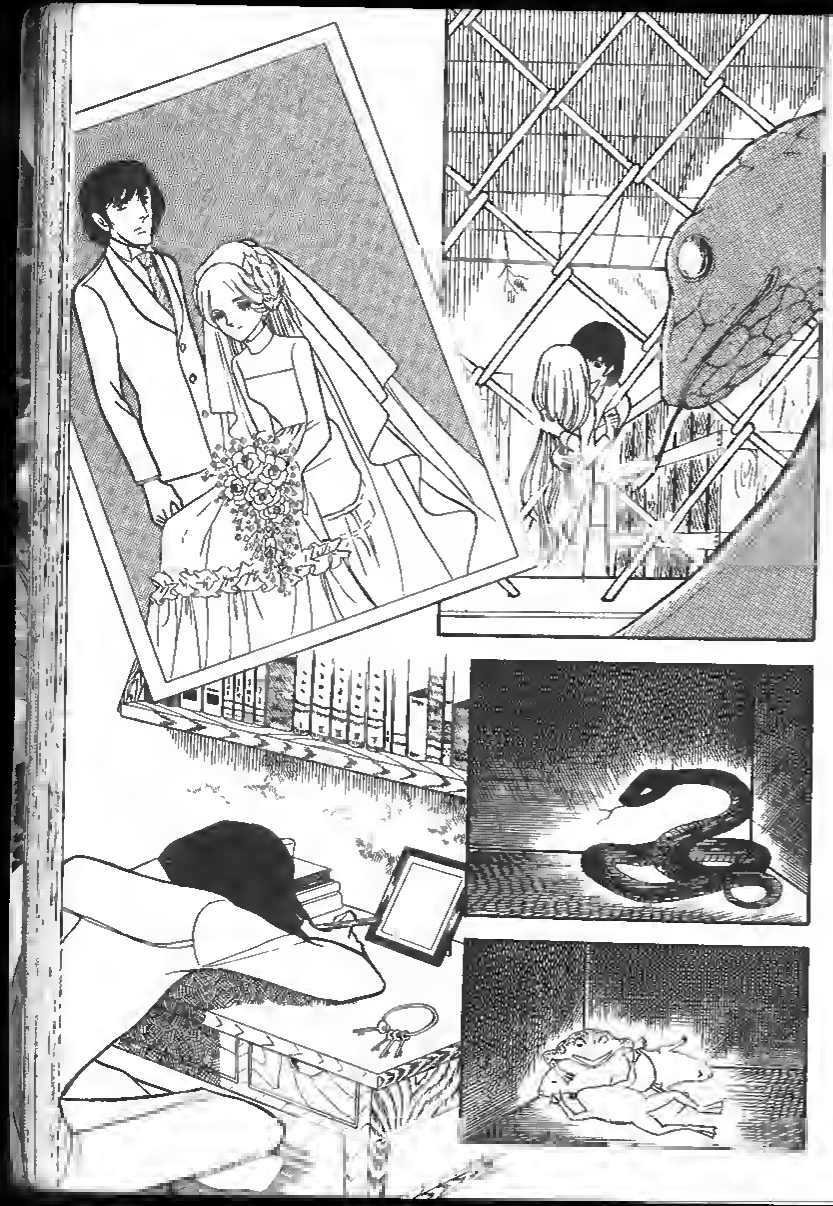
CARE FOR HIM...?
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO LET HIM GO, CAN I AT LEAST CARE FOR HIM?
BUT YOU...
YES. I'D LIKE TO BE YOUR ASSISTANT.
TAMAKO
I'M TAMAKO


I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO MAKE YOUR WISHES COME TRUE.
IF YOU CAN MAKE MY WISH COME TRUE...
ANY WISH?
I...
WILL YOU REALLY LET THE SNAKE GO?
OF COURSE. IF YOU LET ME TAKE YOU AS MY BRIDE
CAN YOU ANSWER ME NOW?

WHAT!?
MARRY ME, TAMAKO.
ACK!
I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU.

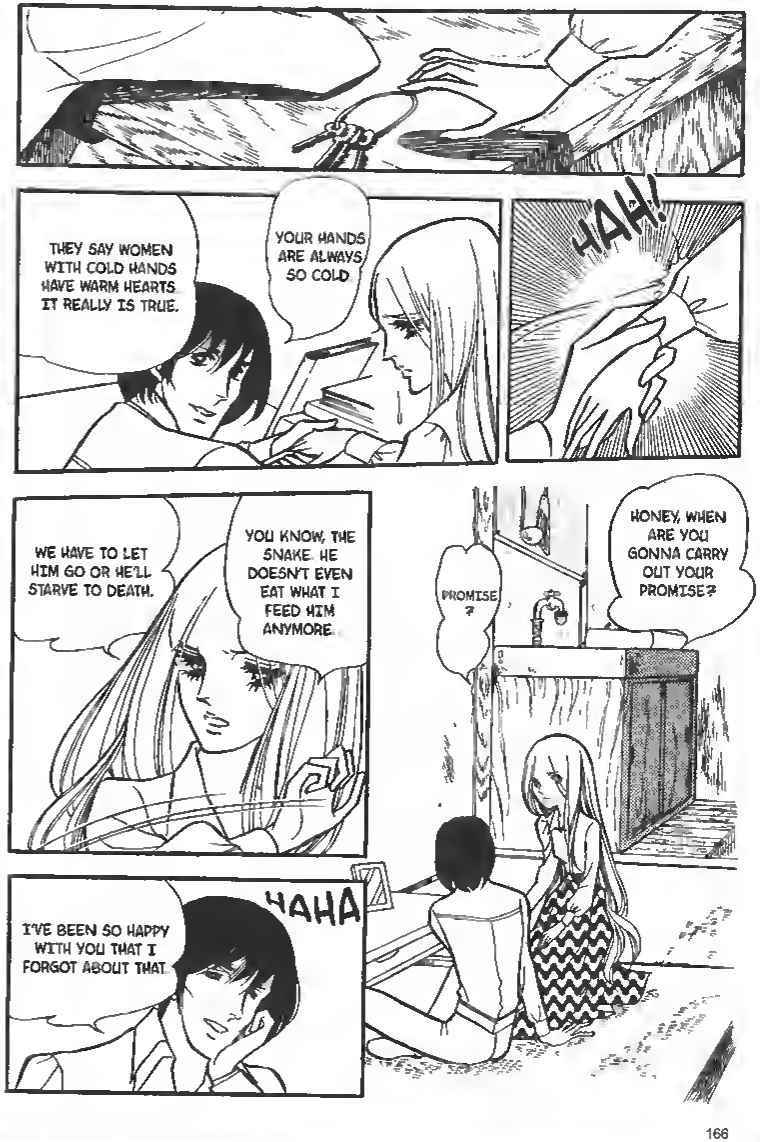
FORGIVE ME...
HE'S REALLY ENJOYING HIS MEAL
I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE ..

IN THAT CASE I...
TAMAKO!
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK



I LOVE YOU, TAMAKO.
SLAM
WAM

NGG
REALLY!?
WE'LL TAKE HIM UP TO THE MOUNTAINS
PREGNANT
BABY...!?
TAMAKO?
FSSHHH
TAMAKO... MAYBE YOU'RE PREGNANT
FSSHHH


THEY SAY WOMEN WITH COLD HANDS HAVE WARM HEARTS. IT REALLY IS TRUE.
YOUR HANDS ARE ALWAYS SO COLD.
HAH!
WE HAVE TO LET HIM GO OR HE'LL STARVE TO DEATH.
YOU KNOW, THE SNAKE. HE DOESN'T EVEN EAT WHAT I FEED HIM ANYMORE.
PROMISE?
HONEY, WHEN ARE YOU GONNA CARRY OUT YOUR PROMISE?
I'VE BEEN SO HAPPY WITH YOU THAT I FORGOT ABOUT THAT.
HAHA

THE SNAKE'S RIGHT HERE
THE SNAKE!
OH NO!?
MONEY? HOW IS THIS...?
LOOK
HOW COULD YOU!?
I SOLD IT TO THIS GUY WHO'S WANTED IT FOR AGES.
THIS IS WHAT'S LEFT OF THE SNAKE..
LET'S BUY A WOODEN ROCKING HORSE
BRILLIANT/ WE'LL NEED A BED FOR THE BABY
I'M PREG-NANT/..
WE NEED A BIG GARDEN FOR OUR BABY/
THIS ROOM IS TOO SMALL.
WITH A HUMAN BABY.

TAMAKO! I DID IT FOR YOU AND THE BABY!
AH...
TAMAKO!
UM...
HAH HAH HAH!
WELCOME! CAN I HELP YOU, MISS?

A STUFFED SPECIMEN!
I NEVER IMAGINED ANYONE WOULD SPEND THIS MUCH MONEY FOR A STUFFED SPECIMEN.
YOU LIED TO ME!
YOU SAID YOU'D LET HIM GO!
OUR HAPPINESS!? DON'T YOU MEAN YOUR HAPPINESS!?
STOP!
DON'T WE WANT A NICE LIFE FOR OUR BABY?
I FIGURED OUR HAPPINESS WAS MORE IMPORTANT.
HONEY, I DIDN'T LIE.
I WANT OUR BABY TO LOOK UP TO ME AS A STRONG FATHER WITH A GOOD HOME.

HOW CRUEL OF THEM...
OH NO...
OH, IT'S SO CRUEL...

NO...
NO...
NO!
WHERE IS HE!?

FORGIVE ME... I COULDN'T SAVE HIS LIFE...
THE LAST MALE THAT COULD SAVE US IS GONE...
PUNISH ME!
PLEASE DON'T LOOK AT ME WITH SUCH COLD EYES!
I EVEN SACRIFICED MY OWN BODY...
TAKE MY LIFE FROM ME.
WRAP YOURSELVES AROUND ME AND STRANGLE ME ALL YOU WANT—

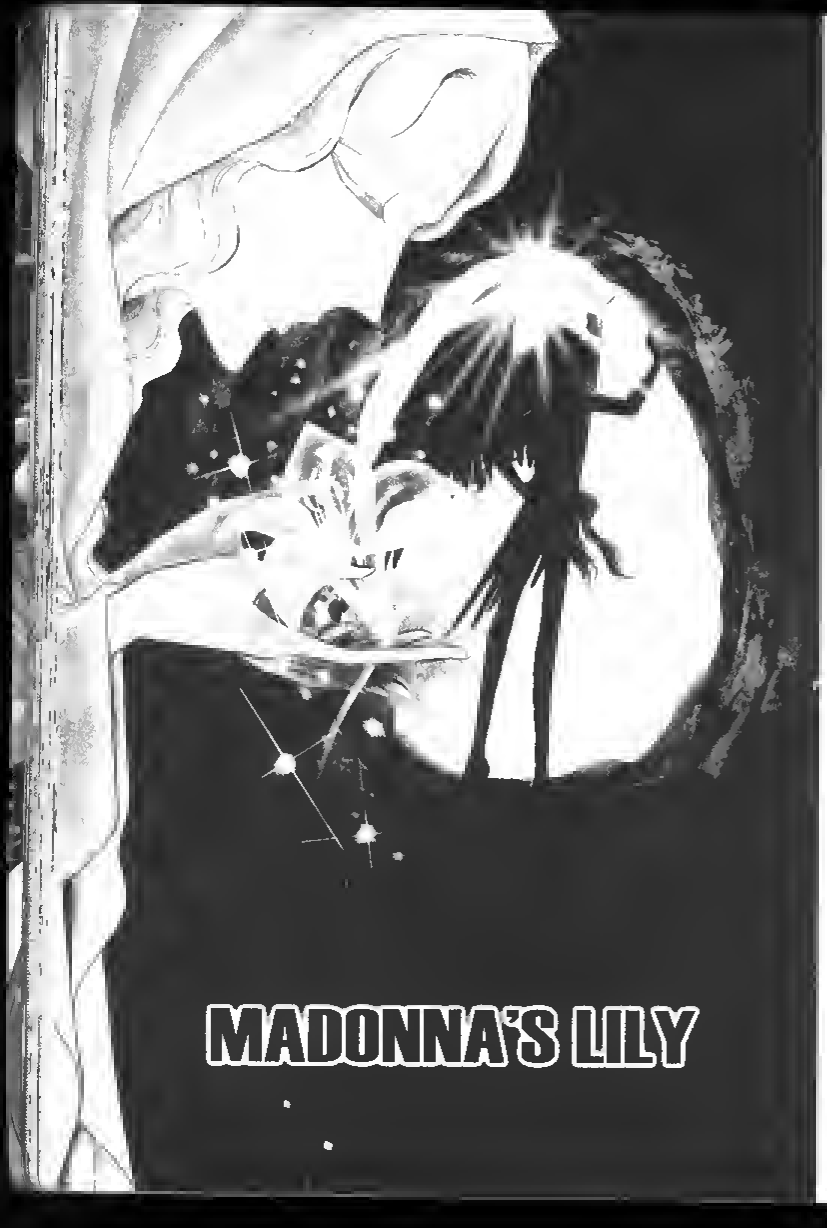
WOBBLE

WE ARE THE MAGATAMAS...
WE ARE DESTINED TO CEASE TO EXIST...
OH.
MY HUSBAND'S COMING. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
ARE YOU SAYING YOU ARE ACTUALLY AN INCARNATION OF A SNAKE?
YES. SEE? MY BABY IS ABOUT DUE.

WAIT! KILL ME...!
KILL ME FIRST!
WE ARE THE MAGA-TAMAS
WE ARE DESTINED TO CEASE TO EXIST...
YOU'RE A FILTHY WOMAN
IMPREGNATED BY A HUMAN
YOU ARE NO LONGER ONE OF US
DON'T SHOW YOURSELF IN FRONT OF US ANYMORE...

JUST LIKE THERE'S A MAN WHO CAN TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO THE DEVIL OR A HUMAN...
THANK YOU.
THIS IS AN INTERVIEW FOR A SCHOOL NEWSPAPER, YES? I'LL ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AS BEST AS I CAN
BUT... MAYBE... MAYBE SHE CAN...
...TRANSFORM HERSELF INTO A SNAKE OR A HUMAN...

H-HELLO!
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING I'M ZOOLOGIST SEKI.
CLIK
PHEW
SEEING YOUR REACTION, I BET MY WIFE WAS TRYING TO SCARE YOU SAYING SHE'S ACTUALLY A SNAKE
AHAHA
SHE MADE IT SOUND SO REAL THAT I NEARLY BELIEVED HER
BABY...
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT
SHE STARTED TALKING LIKE THAT AFTER THE MISCARRIAGE.
MY BABY...


MADONNA'S LILY

Bride Of Deimos

MAYBE CUT IT SHORT AND CURL IT INWARDS
I'D LOVE TO TRY A *PUNK* HAIRSTYLE BUT I'M STILL A STUDENT SO I BETTER NOT...
I AM SURE ANYONE WITH HAIR AS LONG AND BEAUTIFUL AS YOURS WOULD HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT CUTTING IT.
I CAN NEVER GO ALL OUT.
YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE YOUNG AND HAVE THE FREEDOM TO TRY DIFFERENT HAIRSTYLES.
ACTUALLY... MAYBE I'LL JUST GET A TRIM.

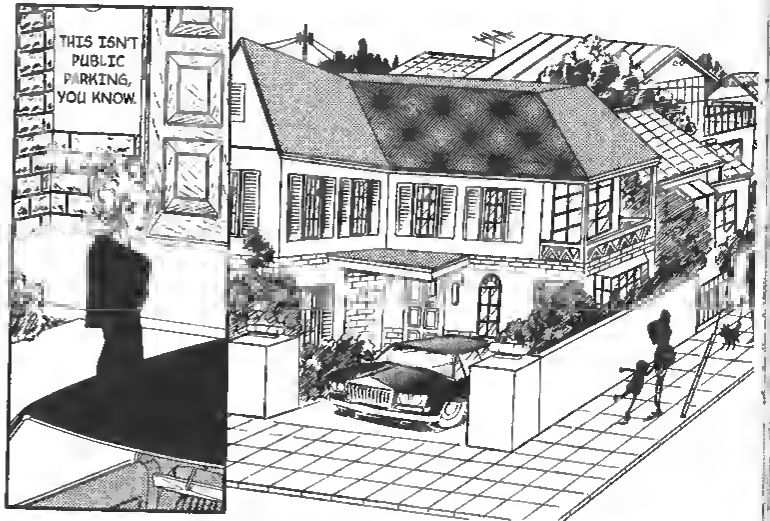
...WAS A SYMBOL OF THE VIRGIN MARY'S PURITY.
THE MADONNA LILY OF ANNUNCIATION THAT THE GREAT ANGEL GABRIEL OFFERED..

YEAH, THE FORMER ACTRESS.
WHAT?! THE GREAT ACTRESS?
BUT SHE'S GORGEOUS.
THAT'S ISABELLE LOTA.
SHE PROBABLY WANTED TO SPEND HER RETIREMENT IN JAPAN, AWAY FROM THE MEDIA AND BUSTLE OF HOLLYWOOD WHO STILL HAS GLORIOUS MEMORIES OF HER.
THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS IS NOW JUST A JOBLESS GRANNY.
I ONCE SAW HER PORTRAY CLEOPATRA ON A TV REVIVAL.
NEVER KNOW WHEN I'LL BE ATTACKED BY CAMERAS.
MY HAIR MUST ALWAYS LOOK PERFECT.
YOU LOOK FABULOUS MADAM LOTA.

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, MINAKO.
OKAY CAN YOU CONTINUE HERE?
MADAM LOTA IS READY.
MADAM LOTA? NO...
DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS?

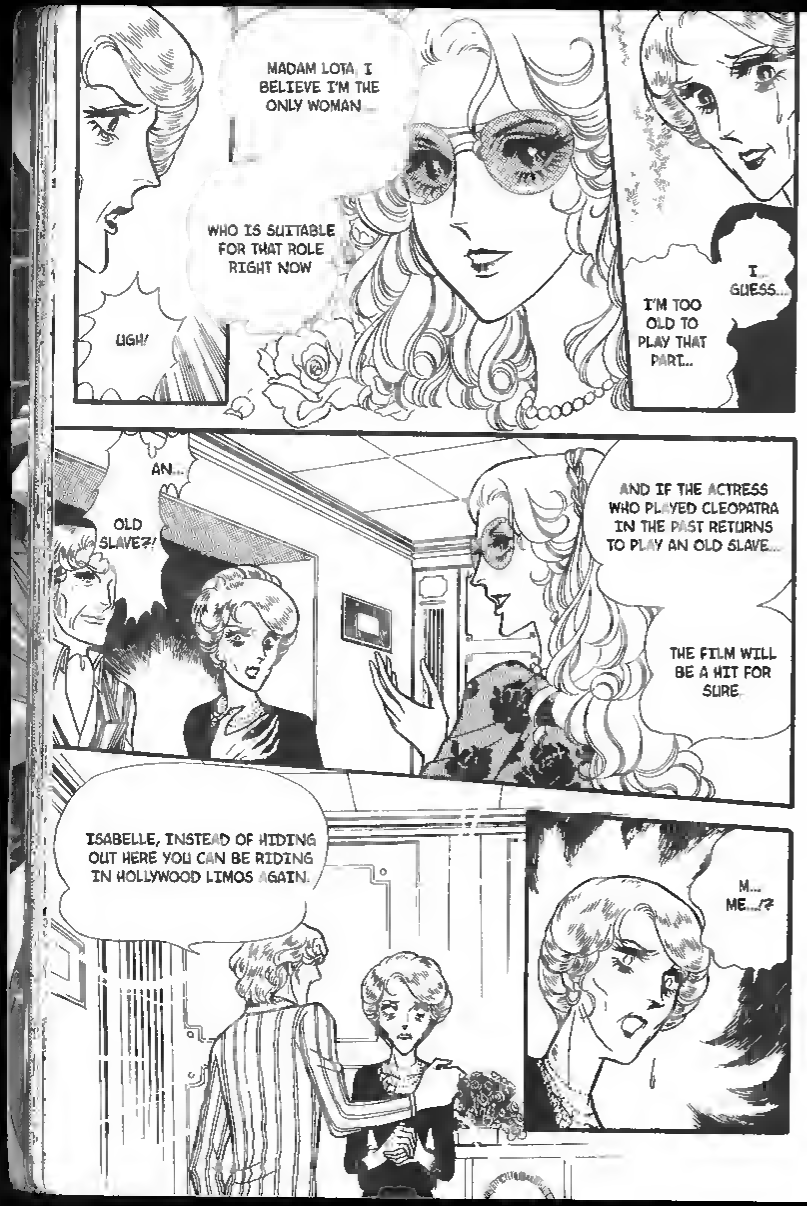
m.ow
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO STILL WELCOMES ME BACK.
meow
HEY BABY.
THAT'S NOT TRUE, ISABELLE.

ONE NEVER FORGETS OLD MEMORIES.
I GUESS ...
IT'S PAINFUL TO SEE A WOMAN, WHO WAS ONCE STUNNING AND BEAUTIFUL, SO AGED...

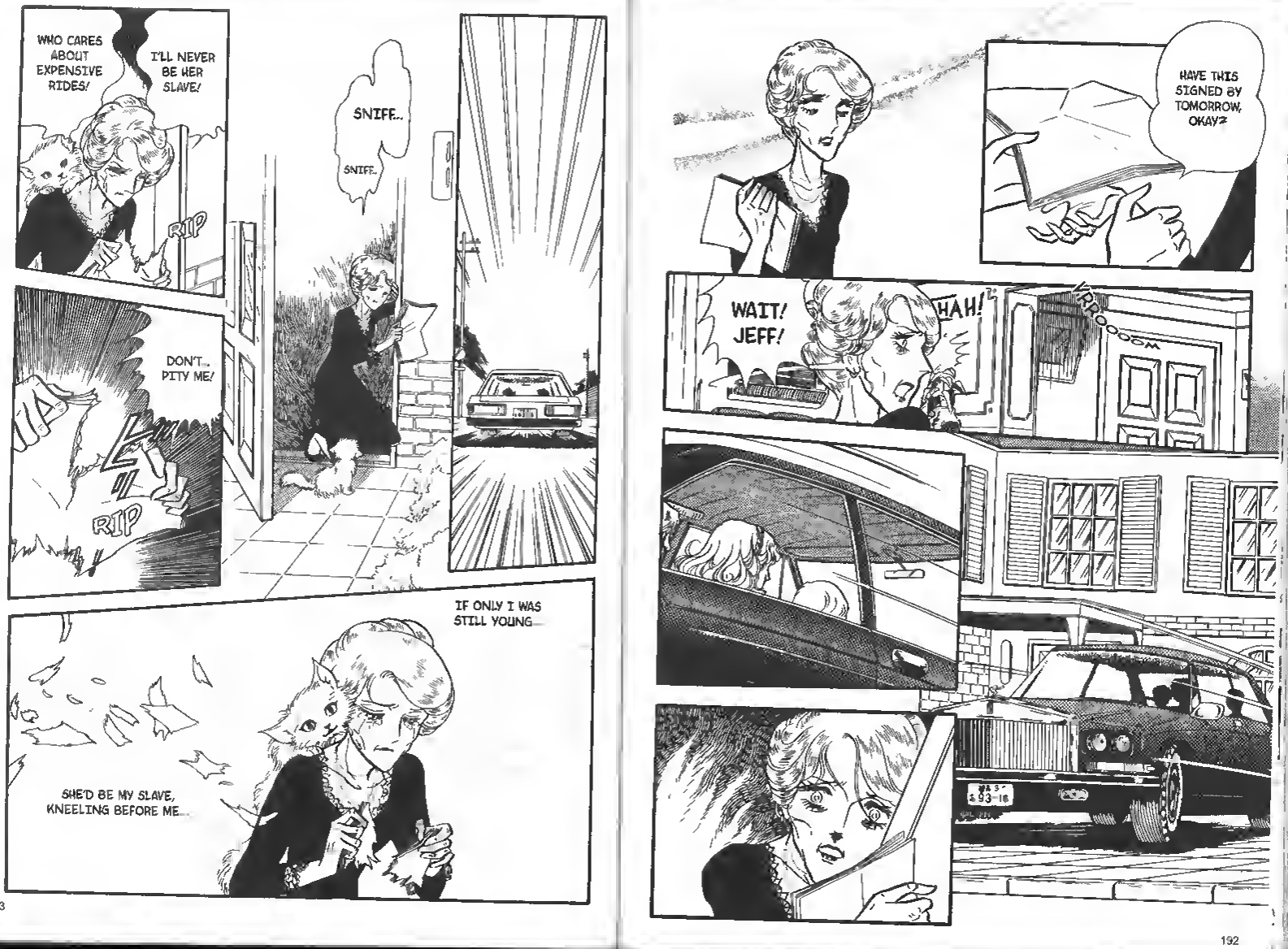

THIS ISN'T PUBLIC PARKING, YOU KNOW.

I WANT YOU TO MAKE A COMEBACK.
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
A COMEBACK!?
NO.
I PAY LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE MEDIA THESE DAYS.
SHE'S A WORLD-CLASS STAR.
I'M SURE YOU KNOW OF HER.
WE'VE DECIDED TO FILM CLEOPATRA AGAIN.
THE "CLEOPATRA" THAT IS SO DEAR TO MY HEART.

JEFF MCKENZIE! THIS MUST BE A DREAM!
JEFF!
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME INTRUDING.
IT'S NO DREAM, DEAR. IT'S ME JEFF, THE REAL FILM PRODUCER IN THE FLESH.
HELLO.
THIS IS THE ACTRESS, KATY CHRIS... SHE'S BEING PROMOTED AS THE SECOND LOTA.


MADAM LOTA, I BELIEVE I'M THE ONLY WOMAN...
WHO IS SUITABLE FOR THAT ROLE RIGHT NOW
UGH!
I'M TOO OLD TO PLAY THAT PART...
I... GUESS...
AND IF THE ACTRESS WHO PLAYED CLEOPATRA IN THE PAST RETURNS TO PLAY AN OLD SLAVE...
THE FILM WILL BE A HIT FOR SURE.
AN... OLD SLAVE?!
ISABELLE, INSTEAD OF HIDING OUT HERE YOU CAN BE RIDING IN HOLLYWOOD LIMOS AGAIN.
M... ME...?

I WANT YOU TO BE IN THE FILM AGAIN.
I WANTED YOU SO BADLY TO SAY YES, I EVEN BROUGHT THE STARRING ACTRESS ALONG.
WONDERFUL, ISABELLE!
JEFF! THIS IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE!
YOU MEAN, SHE WILL PLAY CLEOPATRA'S PART?
HAHAHA!
YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD, DID YOU?
OF COURSE...


HAVE THIS SIGNED BY TOMORROW, OKAY?
WAIT! JEFF!
AAH!
VRROOOOM
93-16

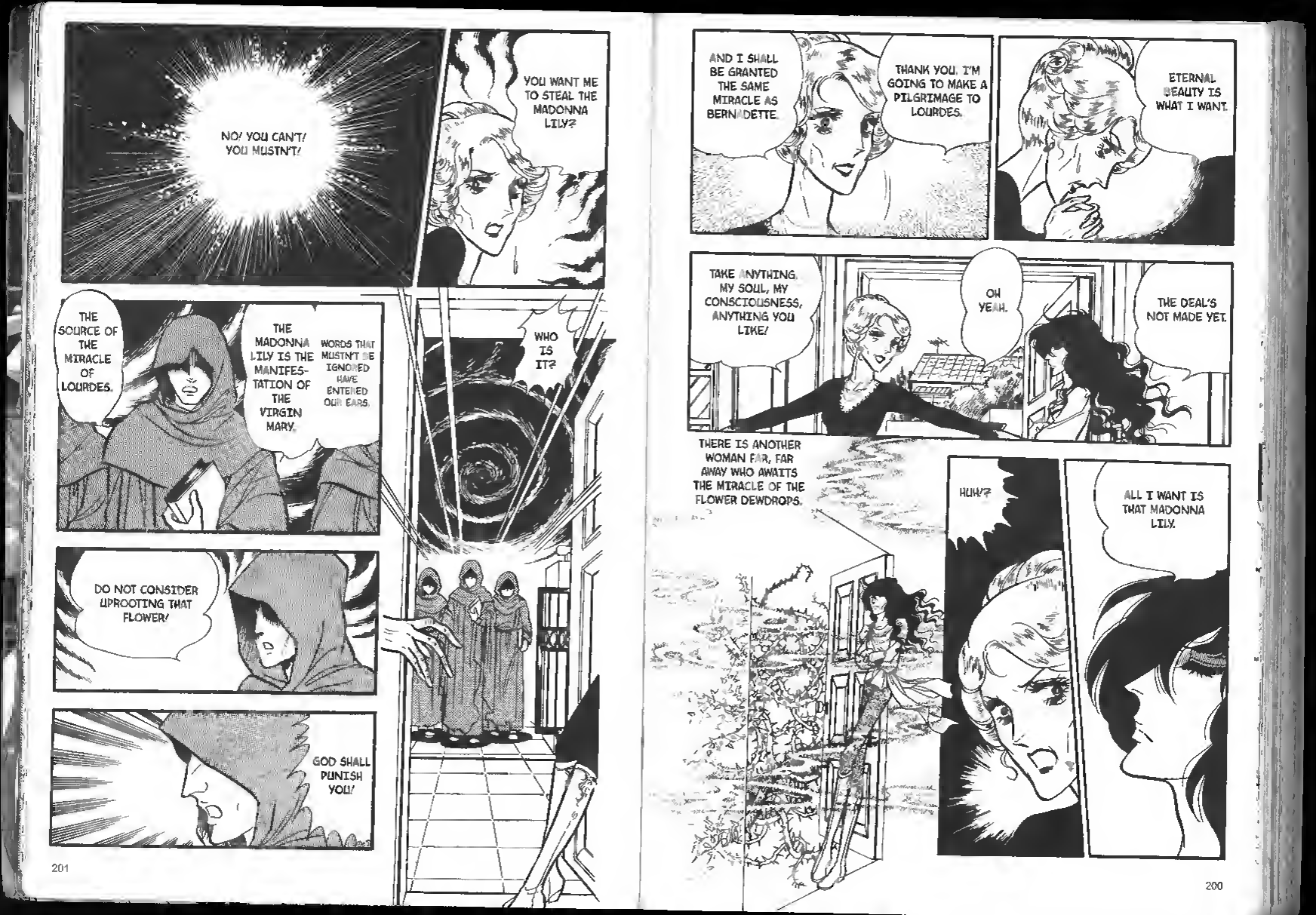
WHO CARES ABOUT EXPENSIVE RIDES!
I'LL NEVER BE HER SLAVE!
RIP
SNIFF..
SNIFF..
DON'T... PITY ME!
RIP
IF ONLY I WAS STILL YOUNG...
SHE'D BE MY SLAVE, KNEELING BEFORE ME...

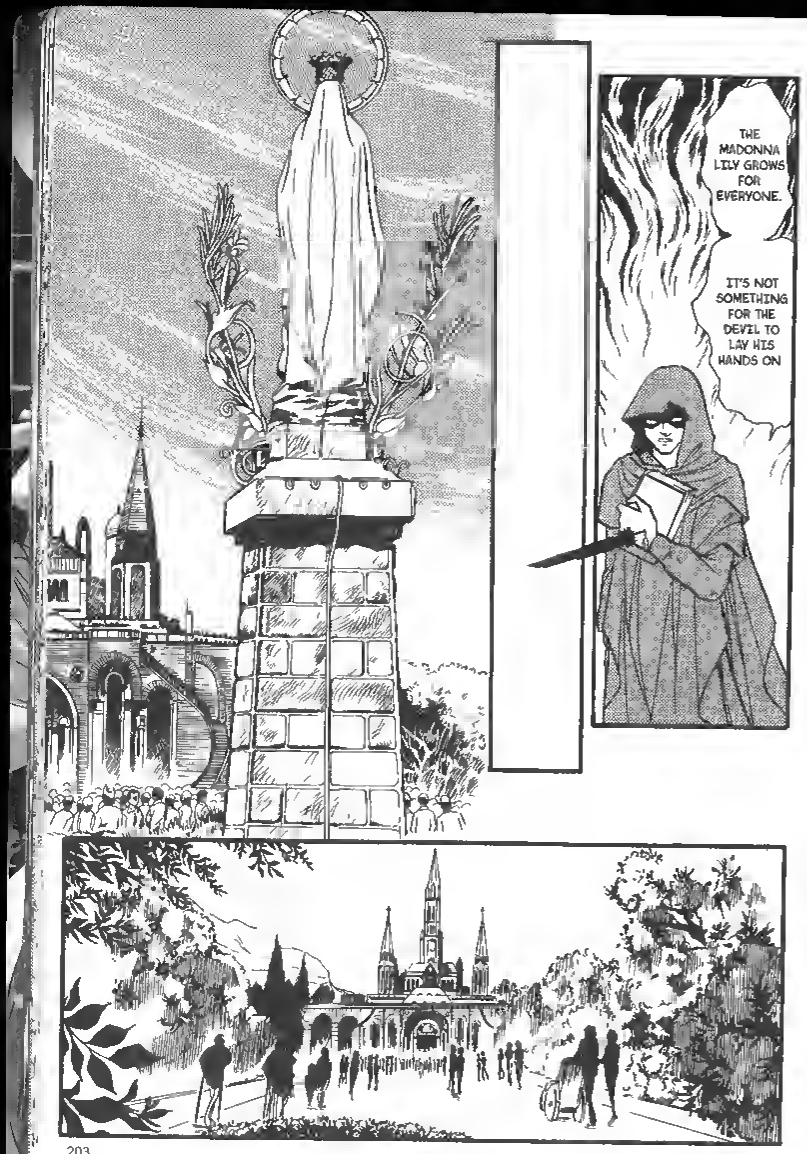
I WANT TO BE YOUNG AGAIN!
IF I HAD A CHANCE TO BE YOUTHFUL AGAIN, I'D SELL MY SOUL TO THE DEVIL THE WAY FAUST DID!
SSST
WHO ARE YOU!?
YOU SHOULD KNOW... YOU CALLED ME HERE
YOU SHOULD SIGN MY CONTRACT.
THEN INSTEAD OF SIGNING THAT PIECE OF PAPER
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR JOKES!
AHAHAHAHA!
HAH!!
YOU MEAN, THE DEVIL?
WANT MORE PROOF?
ARE YOU REALLY THE DEVIL?
OH MY.

TELL ME!
HOW CAN I GET WHAT I WANT?
YOU HAVE THE SAME WISH...
VENUS, MY SISTER IN HADES...
ABOUT ONE-HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS AGO, IN PYRENEES, FRANCE, THERE LIVED A GIRL NAMED BERNADETTE, WHOSE FAMILY RAN A MILL.
NO ONE COULD SAY HOW LONG SHE'D LIVE
SHE WAS AN AFFECTIONATE GIRL BUT SUDDENLY DEVELOPED A MALIGNANT TUMOR ON HER FACE.

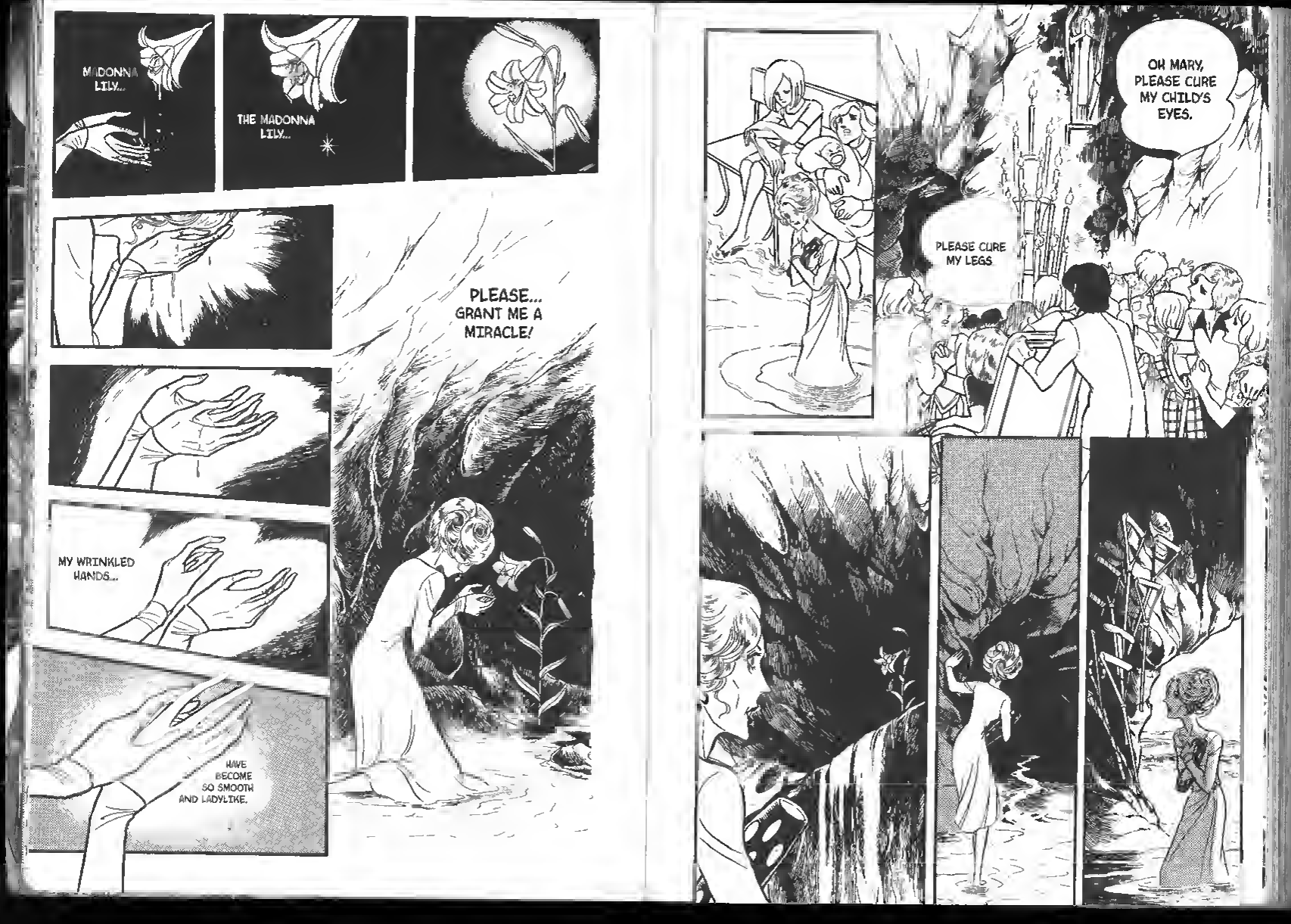
OR DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DEAL?
I CAN ONLY TELL YOU HOW TO GET YOUR HANDS ON THEM.
ARE YOU SAYING YOU CAN GIVE ME WHAT I WANT?
THAT YOU CAN PRODUCE MIRACLES?
I'LL DO ANYTHING TO GET MY BEAUTY AND YOUTH BACK.
FINE.
GOD CREATES MIRACLES.

BERNADETTE LATER BUILT A CHURCH BY THE SPRING AND DIED AS A NUN.
OH MARY /
MY TUMOR HAS HEALED/ IT'S A MIRACLE/
IT MUST BE A MIRACLE/
EVEN NOW MILLIONS OF PEOPLE MAKE PILGRIMAGES TO THE SPRING
THIS IS KNOWN WORLDWIDE AS THE MIRACLE OF LOURDES
ONE-HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS LATER, BERNADETTE'S CORPSE LIES IN A GLASS COFFIN AS BEAUTIFUL AS SHE WAS WHEN SHE WAS ALIVE.
WHEN SHE AWOKE, SHE WENT TO THE CAVE WHERE SHE SAW THE VIRGIN MARY IN HER DREAM AND FOUND A MADONNA LILY
SPRING WATER WAS FLOWING OUT FROM THE STEM OF THE LILY.
ONE DAY, AS BERNADETTE WAS NAPPING IN THE FIELDS, SHE DREAMT OF THE VIRGIN MARY
IN THE DREAM, SHE WAS TOLD TO WASH HER FACE WITH FLOWER DEWDROPS AND SPRING WATER.

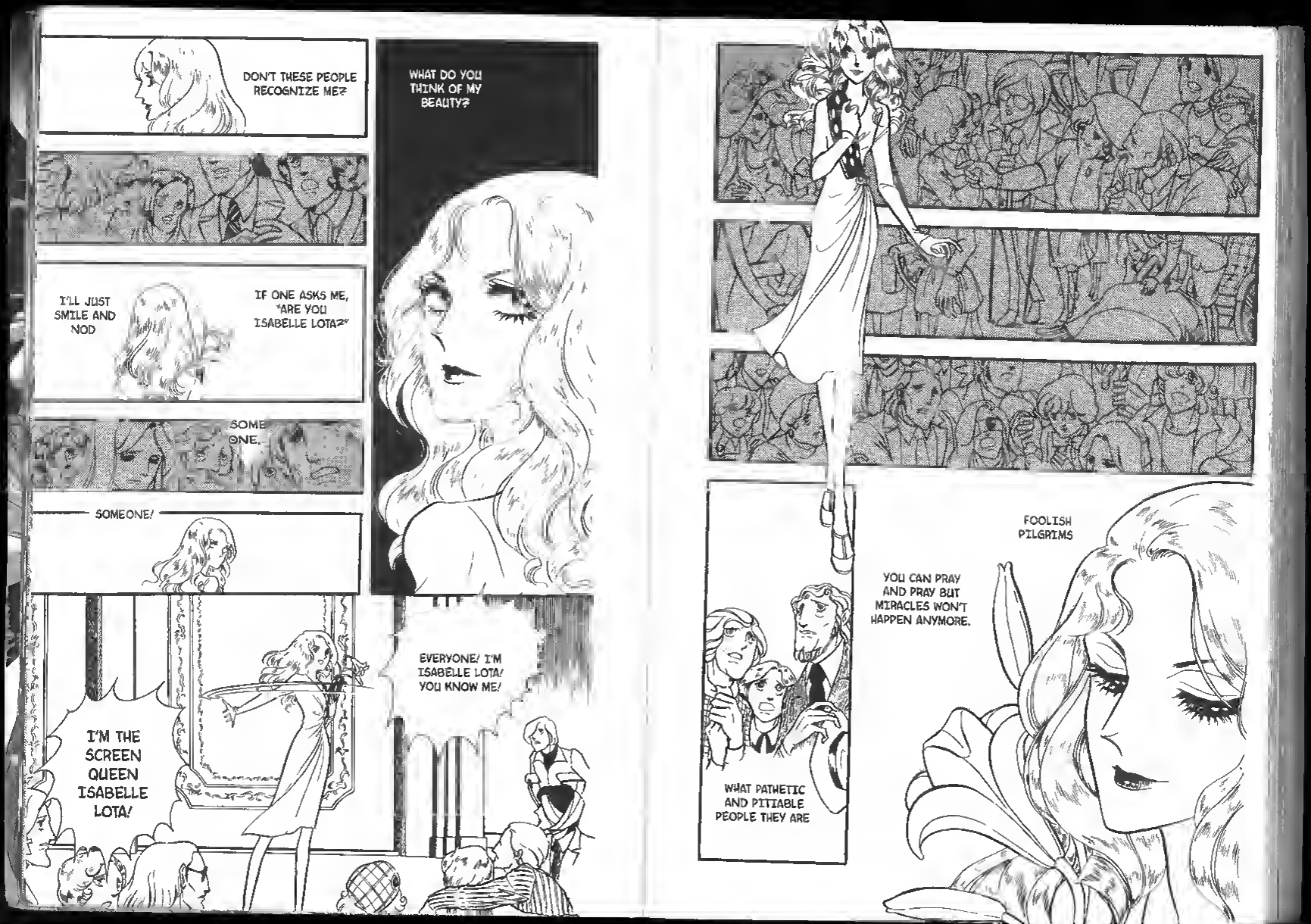

AND I SHALL BE GRANTED THE SAME MIRACLE AS BERNADETTE.
THANK YOU. I'M GOING TO MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES.
ETERNAL BEAUTY IS WHAT I WANT.
TAKE ANYTHING. MY SOUL, MY CONSCIOUSNESS, ANYTHING YOU LIKE!
OH YEAH.
THE DEAL'S NOT MADE YET.
THERE IS ANOTHER WOMAN FAR, FAR AWAY WHO AWAITS THE MIRACLE OF THE FLOWER DEWDROPS.
HUH!?
ALL I WANT IS THAT MADONNA LILY.
200
NO! YOU CAN'T! YOU MUSTN'T!
YOU WANT ME TO STEAL THE MADONNA LILY?
THE SOURCE OF THE MIRACLE OF LOURDES.
THE MADONNA LILY IS THE MANIFES-TATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
WORDS THAT MUSTN'T BE IGNORED HAVE ENTERED OUR EARS.
WHO IS IT?
DO NOT CONSIDER UPROOTING THAT FLOWER!
GOD SHALL PUNISH YOU!
201


THE MADONNA LILY GROWS FOR EVERYONE.
IT'S NOT SOMETHING FOR THE DEVIL TO LAY HIS HANDS ON

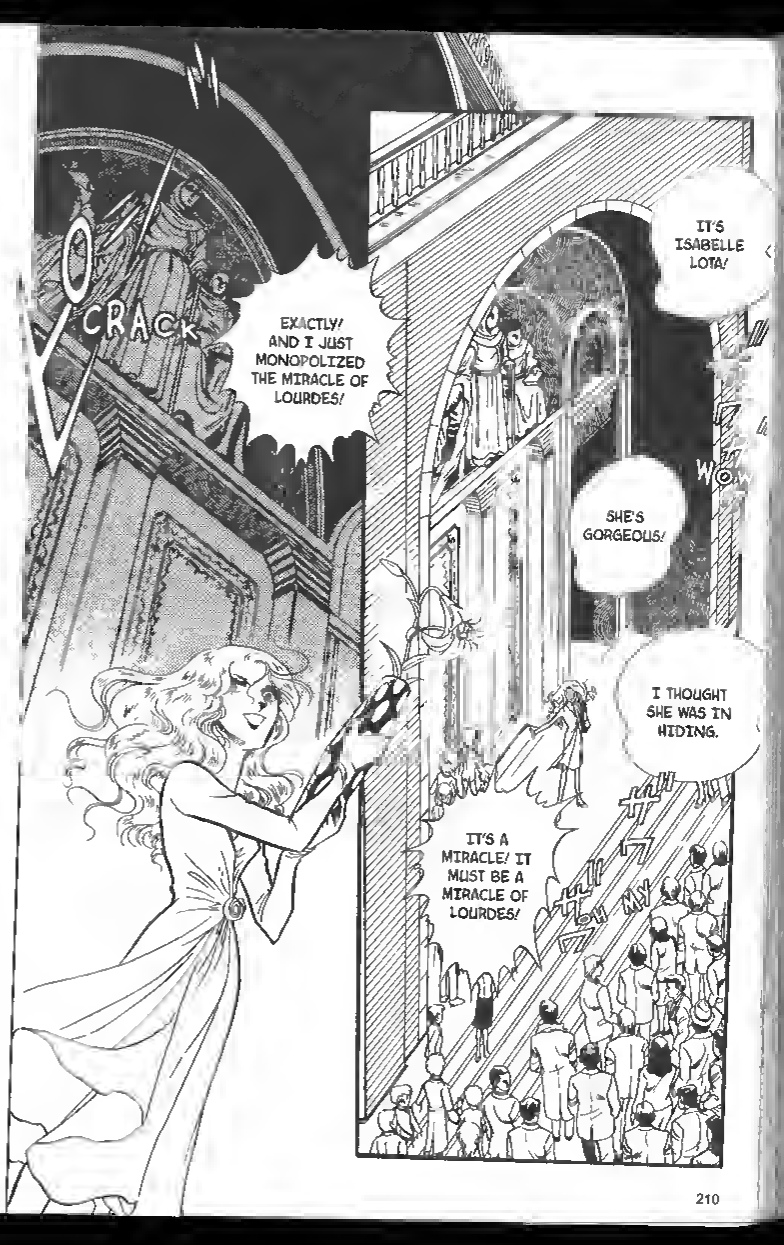
DIVINE PUNISHMENT DOESN'T SCARE ME ONE BIT!
YOU CAN'T SCARE ME
I CAN ONLY SEE MY YOUTH AND BEAUTY!
YOU THINK I FEAR THE BIBLE?
IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY BIBLE, WE SHALL PROTECT THE MADONNA LILY
BE GONE!
FLING

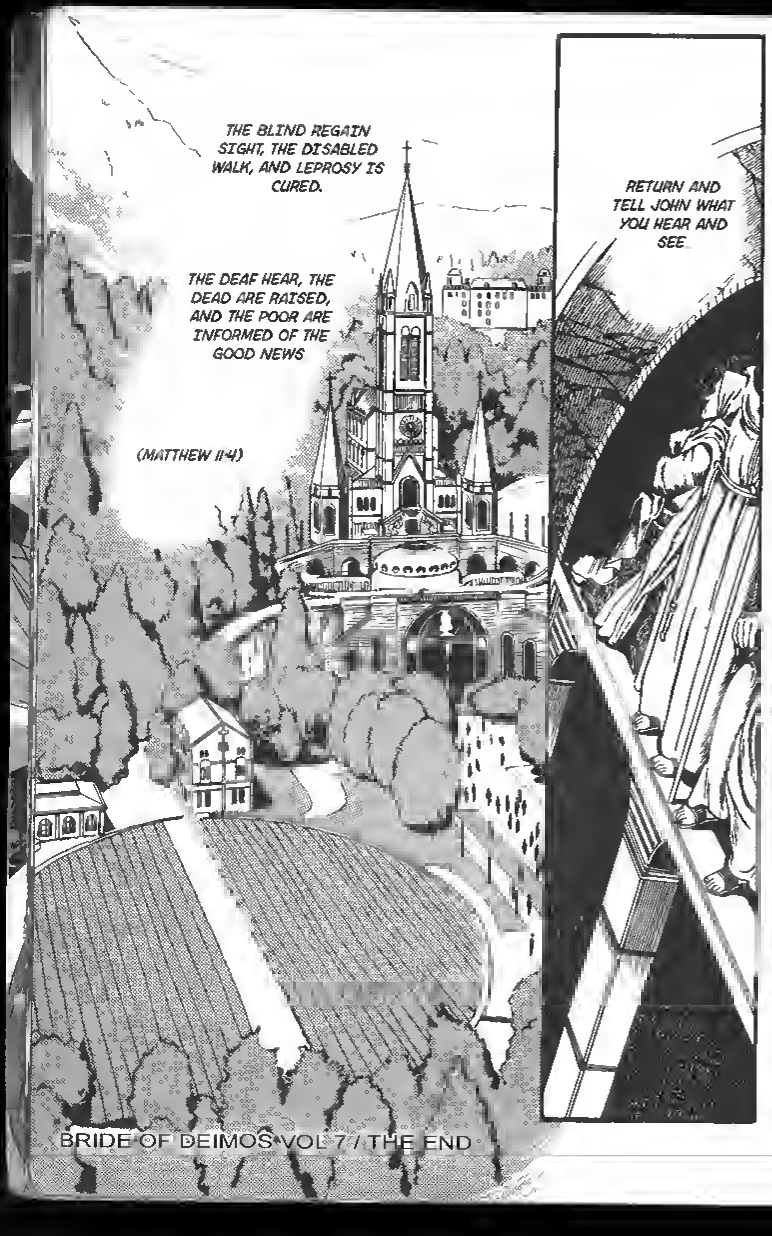

MADONNA LILY...
THE MADONNA LILY...
PLEASE... GRANT ME A MIRACLE!
MY WRINKLED HANDS...
HAVE BECOME SO SMOOTH AND LADYLIKE.
OH MARY, PLEASE CURE MY CHILD'S EYES.
PLEASE CURE MY LEGS.

MY FACE!
MY FACE...!
I HAVE REVIVED! I HAVE BEEN GRANTED THE ULTIMATE BLISS!
OH, ISABELLE LOTA! YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU USED TO BE.
YOU LOOK YOUNG AND STUNNING!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS KEEP MY PROMISE TO THE DEVIL.
I POSSESS MY GREATEST WISH.
ETERNAL BEAUTY.
WHAT THE DEVIL WISHES TO DO WITH THIS FLOWER IS OF NO CONCERN TO ME.


DON'T THESE PEOPLE RECOGNIZE ME?
I'LL JUST SMILE AND NOD
IF ONE ASKS ME, "ARE YOU ISABELLE LOTA?"
SOME
ONE.
SOMEONE!
I'M THE SCREEN QUEEN ISABELLE LOTA!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY BEAUTY?
EVERYONE! I'M ISABELLE LOTA! YOU KNOW ME!
WHAT PATHETIC AND PITIABLE PEOPLE THEY ARE
FOOLISH PILGRIMS
YOU CAN PRAY AND PRAY BUT MIRACLES WON'T HAPPEN ANYMORE.

SNAP
CRACK
AHAHAHA!
CRUMBLE
I HAVE MONOPOLIZED THE MIRACLE!


CRACK
EXACTLY! AND I JUST MONOPOLIZED THE MIRACLE OF LOURDES!
IT'S ISABELLE LOTA!
WOW
SHE'S GORGEOUS!
I THOUGHT SHE WAS IN HIDING.
IT'S A MIRACLE! IT MUST BE A MIRACLE OF LOURDES!


THE BLIND REGAIN SIGHT, THE DISABLED WALK, AND LEPROSY IS CURED.
THE DEAF HEAR, THE DEAD ARE RAISED, AND THE POOR ARE INFORMED OF THE GOOD NEWS
(MATTHEW 11:4)
RETURN AND TELL JOHN WHAT YOU HEAR AND SEE.

SHATTER
AUGH!
SLAM
THE MADONNA LILY WAS RETURNED TO THE SPRING AND PEOPLE CONTINUE TO VISIT IT.

The year is 2100! On a barren Earth, natural environmental reproduction is no longer possible. The population has placed their stakes on a reckless organization in hopes that they can purify the planet for environmental growth. But the organization known as Z.P.T. fails tragically. Many humans are transformed to white sand. Was this massacre an accident, or does Z.P.T. hold some dark intent for the unfortunate inhabitants? In this post-apocalyptic future three buxom young women - Liza, Wooty, Mii and one fortunate young man - Louis, use their mechanical prowess to fend off mecha Z.P.T.'s superior mechanized military forces. Guns and mecha mix with ecchi humor in this manga adventure.

JUNK FORCE

Leave the planet and don't look back!

Author: Hideki Hakimura [DARTS]
Art: Yusuke Kaa

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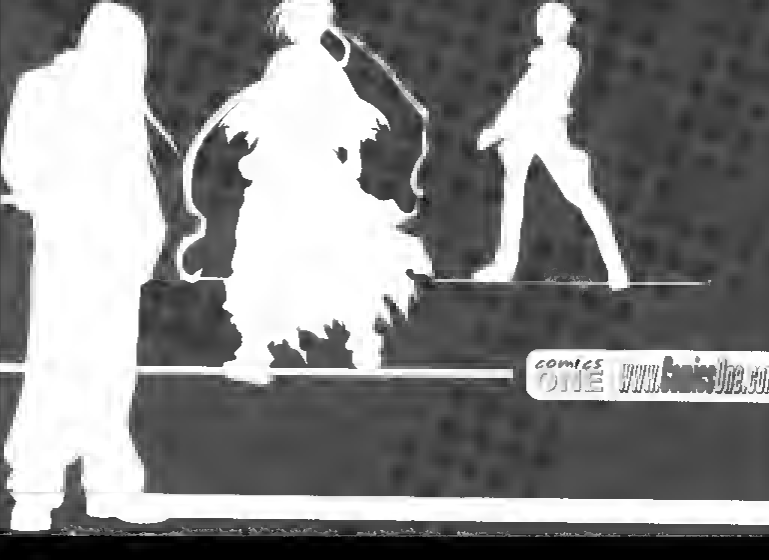

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School is Back in Session!

Please Teacher

Novel Fanbook

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Para Para

In Andy Seto's Para Para, Yuki a young dance competitor and a young gangster are drawn together by the the events which had previously led to the death of Yuki's sister. Action, mystery, intrigue and hip dance moves help to raise the popular Para Para craze to new heights.

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SISTER RED

シスター レット

Mahito lives at home with her father and her cousin Erika, who came to live with Mahito's fam several years ago after the death of her parents. One fateful stormy night Mahito is fatally down by a reckless motorist. Upon her death she is reborn with the help of a strange wor This woman shared a part of her "Sacred Heart" with Mahito, giving her life as a Medjan, Undead.

It is a strange world Mahito is introduced to. As a Medjan, Mahito possesses unique powers sees the world around her for what it really is - a place quite different than what we hum perceive. It is a darker more foreboding plane where danger can lurk behind any given corner.

BY: SHIZURU HAYASHIYA
ARTIST OF ONEGAI TEACHER

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Writer - Ho Sik Kim
Artist . Dae Hong Min

B[illegible] op the Korean

My Sassy Girl is the comic based on the mega popular Korean movie of the same name. My Sassy Girl is a quirky romantic comedy following the lives of two college students brought together [illegible]. Gyeon-woo is a clean-cut naive boy who becomes involved [illegible] "Sassy" girl who manages to wrap him around her finger as [illegible] tries to see her through troubled times. The story is filled with humor and surprising events as the two try to find out if opposites really attract!

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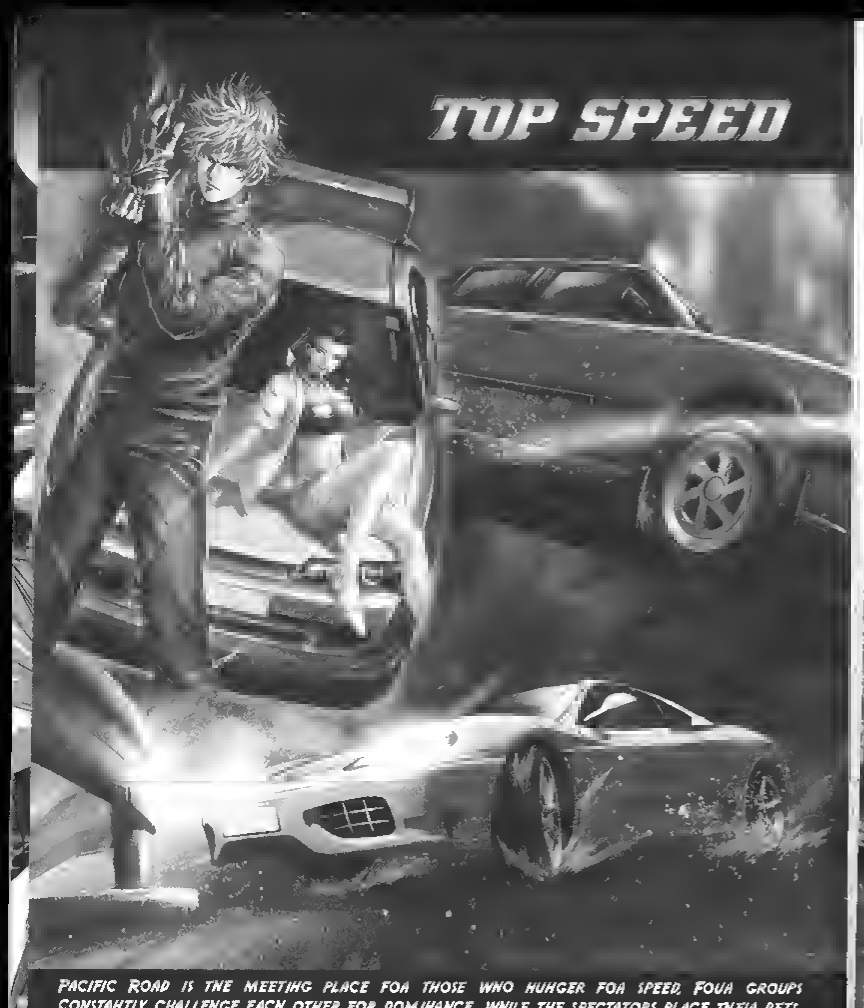

PACIFIC ROAD IS THE MEETING PLACE FOR THOSE WHO HUNGER FOR SPEED. FOUR GROUPS CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE EACH OTHER FOR DOMINANCE, WHILE THE SPECTATORS PLACE THEIR BETS. ONE NIGHT, A UNKNOWN TAXICAB LEAVES EVERYONE IN THE DUST. BEHIND THE WHEEL IS TIAN, A YOUNG MAN WHO LOST HIS FAMOUS RACING FATHER TO AN ACCIDENT DURING A RACE. LITTLE DOES HE KNOW THAT HIS JOB AS A TAXI DRIVER, WILL SOON EXPOSE HIS UNBELIEVABLE DRIVING SKILLS. NATURALLY, EVERYONE WANTS A PIECE OF THIS SUPERIOR DRIVER - THIS DRIVER WITH NOTHING BUT HATRED FOR RACING.

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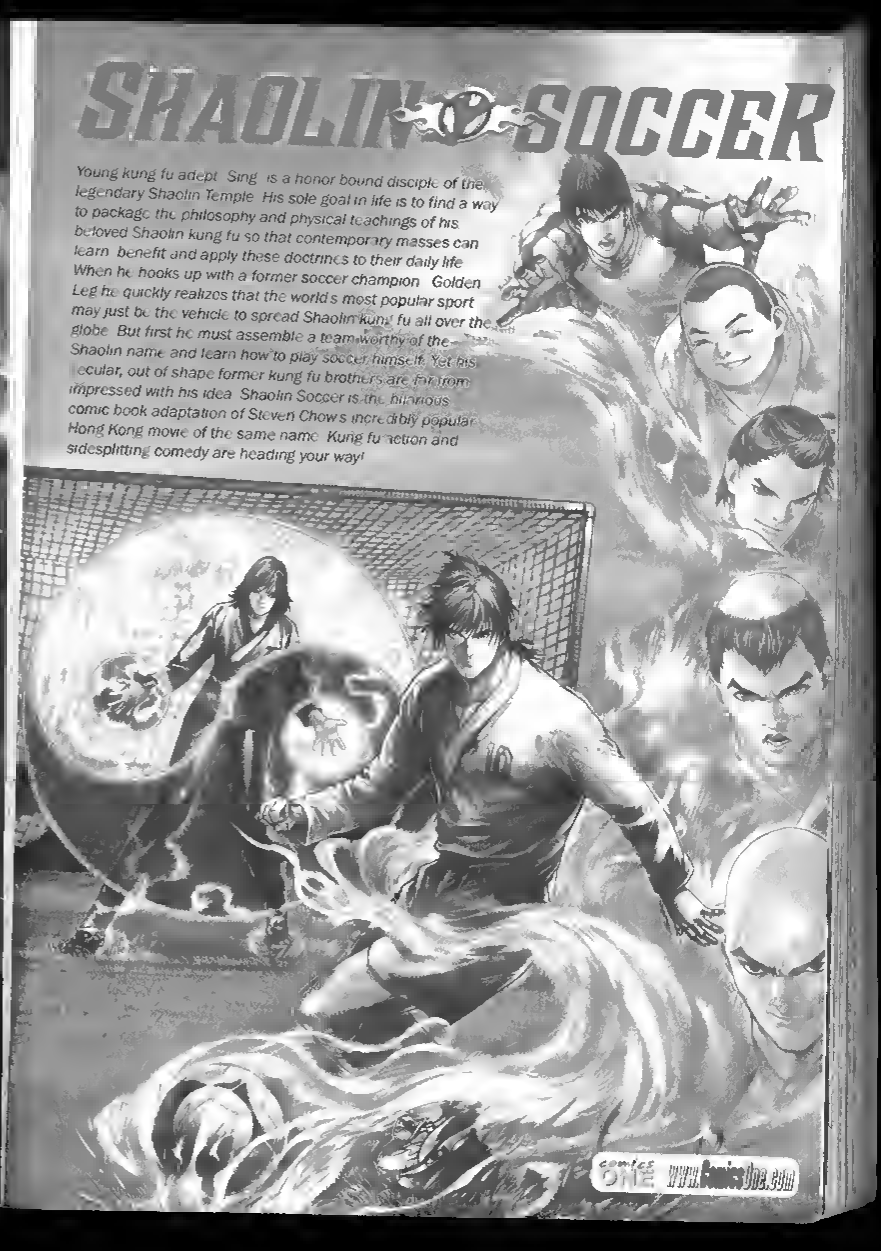

Young kung fu adept Sing is a honor bound disciple of the legendary Shaolin Temple. His sole goal in life is to find a way to package the philosophy and physical teachings of his beloved Shaolin kung fu so that contemporary masses can learn, benefit and apply these doctrines to their daily life. When he hooks up with a former soccer champion, Golden Leg he quickly realizes that the world's most popular sport may just be the vehicle to spread Shaolin kung fu all over the globe. But first he must assemble a team worthy of the Shaolin name and learn how to play soccer himself. Yet his secular, out of shape former kung fu brothers are far from impressed with his idea. Shaolin Soccer is the hilarious comic book adaptation of Steven Chow's incredibly popular Hong Kong movie of the same name. Kung fu action and sidesplitting comedy are heading your way!

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